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FROM

DR. GEORGE BROWNING WILBUR

ESSAYS

ON THE

Materialistic Conception of History

BY

ANTONIO LABRIOLA

Professor in the University of Rome

TRANSLATED BY

CHARLES H. KERR

CHICAGO

CHARLES H. KERR & COMPANY

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

On the tenth of March, 1896, the same year that the last despairing revolt of the small producer against capitalism in America was to end in the overwhelming defeat of Bryan, an Italian scholar published in the city of Rome the remarkable work which is now for the first time offered to American readers.

To publish this book in America at that time would have been an impossibility. The American socialist movement was then hardly more than an association of immigrants who had brought their socialism with them from Europe. Today it numbers at least half a million adherents, and its platform is an embodiment of the ideas first adequately stated in the Communist Manifesto of 1848, and now first adequately explained and elaborated in this remarkable work of Labriola.

The central and fundamental proposition of socialism is not any scheme for reconstructing society, on a cut-and-dried programme, nor again is it any particular mathematical formula showing to what extent the laborer is robbed by the present system of the fruits of his labor; it is precisely this Historical Materialism, which Labriola has so admirably explained in the present work.

Some idea of the place accorded to this book by European socialists may be gathered from the preface to the French edition by G. Sorel, one of the most prominent socialists of France.

He says: "The publication of this book marks a date in the history of socialism. The work of Labriola has its place reserved in our libraries by the side of the classic works of Marx and Engels. It constitutes an illumination and a methodical development of a theory which the masters of the new socialist thought have never yet treated in a didactic form. It is therefore an indispensable book for whoever wishes to understand something of *proletarian ideas.* More than the works of Marx and Engels it is addressed to that public which is unacquainted with socialist preconceptions. In these pages the historian will find substantial and valuable suggestion for the study of the origin and transformation of institutions."

The economic development of the United States has reached a point where the growth of the Socialist Party must henceforth go forward with startling rapidity. That the publication of this volume may have some effect in clarifying the ideas of those who discuss the principles of that party, whether with voice or pen, is the hope of the

TRANSLATOR.

ESSAYS ON THE MATERIALISTIC CONCEPTION OF HISTORY

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PART I

IN MEMORY OF THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO

ESSAYS

ON THE

Materialistic Conception of History

PART I

IN MEMORY OF THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO.

I.

In three years we can celebrate our jubilee. The memorable date of the publication of the Communist Manifesto (February, 1848) marks our first unquestioned entrance into history. To that date are referred all our judgments and all our congratulations on the progress made by the proletariat in these last fifty years. That date marks the beginning of the new era. This is arising, or, rather, is separating itself from the present era, and is developing by a process peculiar to itself and thus in a way that is necessary and inevitable, whatever may be the vicissitudes and the successive phases which cannot yet be foreseen.

All those in our ranks who have a desire or an occasion to possess a better understanding of their

own work should bring to mind the causes and the moving forces which determined the genesis of the Manifesto, the circumstances under which it appeared on the eve of the Revolution which burst forth from Paris to Vienna, from Palermo to Berlin. Only in this way will it be possible for us to find in the present social form the explanation of the tendency toward socialism, thus showing by its present necessity the inevitability of its triumph.

Is not that in fact the vital part of the Manifesto, its essence and its distinctive character?

We surely should be taking a false road if we regarded as the essential part the measures advised and proposed at the end of the second chapter for the contingency of a revolutionary success on the part of the proletariat,—or again the indications of political relationship to the other revolutionary parties of that epoch which are found in the fourth chapter. These indications and these measures, although they deserved to be taken into consideration at the moment and under the circumstances where they were formulated and suggested, and although they may be very important for forming a precise estimate of the political action of the German communists in the revolutionary period from 1848 to 1850, henceforth no longer form for us a mass of practical judgments for or against which we should take sides in each contingency. The political parties which since the International have established themselves in different countries, in the name of the

proletariat, and taking it clearly for their base, have felt, and feel, in proportion as they are born and develop, the imperious necessity of adopting and conforming their programme and their action to circumstances always different and multiform. But not one of these parties feels the dictatorship of the proletariat so near that it experiences the need or desire or even the temptation to examine anew and pass judgment upon the measures proposed in the Manifesto. There are really no historic experiences but those that history makes itself. It is as impossible to foresee them as to plan them beforehand or make them to order. That is what happened at the moment of the Commune, which was and which still remains up to this day the only experience (although partial and confused because it was sudden and of short duration) of the action of the proletariat in gaining control of political power. This experience, too, was neither desired nor sought for, but imposed by circumstances. It was heroically carried through and it has become a salutary lesson for us to-day. It might easily happen that where the socialist movement is still in its beginnings, appeal may be made, for lack of personal direct experience—as often happens in Italy—to the authority of a text from the Manifesto as if it were a precept, but these passages are in reality of no importance.

Again, we must not, as I believe, seek for this vital part, this essence, this distinctive character, in what the Manifesto says of the other forms of so-

cialism of which it speaks under the name of *literature*. The entire third chapter may doubtless serve for defining clearly by way of exclusion and antithesis, by brief but vigorous characterizations, the differences which really exist between the communism commonly characterized to-day as scientific,—an expression sometimes used in a mistaken and contradictory way,—that is to say, between the communism which has the proletariat for its subject and the proletarian revolution for its theme, and the other forms of socialism; reactionary, bourgeois, semi-bourgeois, petit-bourgeois, utopian, etc. All these forms except one* have re-appeared and renewed themselves more than once. They are reappearing under a new form even to-day in the countries where the modern proletarian movement is of recent birth. For these countries and under these circumstances the Manifesto has exercised and still exercises the function of contemporary criticism and of a literary whip. And in the countries where these forms have already been theoretically and practically outgrown, as in Germany and Austria, or survive only as an individual opinion among a few, as in France and England, without speaking of other nations, the Manifesto from this point of

* I refer to that form which the Manifesto designates ironically under the name of "German or 'True' Socialism." This paragraph, which is unintelligible for those who are not well versed in the German philosophy of that epoch, notably in certain of its tendencies marked by acute degeneracy, has, with good reason, been suppressed in the Spanish translation.

view has played its part. It thus merely records as a matter of history something no longer necessary to think of, since we have to deal with the political action of the proletariat which already is before us in its gradual and normal course.

That was, to anticipate, the attitude of mind of those who wrote it. By the force of their thought and with some scanty data of experience they had anticipated the events which have occurred and they contented themselves with declaring the elimination and the condemnation of what they had outgrown. Critical communism—that is its true name, and there is none more exact for this doctrine—did not take its stand with the feudalists in regretting the old society for the sake of criticising by contrast the contemporary society:—it had an eye only to the future. Neither did it associate itself with the petty bourgeois in the desire of saving what cannot be saved:—as, for example, small proprietorship, or the tranquil life of the small proprietor whom the bewildering action of the modern state, the necessary and natural organ of present society, destroys and overturns, because by its constant revolutions it carries in itself the necessity for other revolutions new and more fundamental.

Neither did it translate into metaphysical whimsicalities, into a sickly sentimentalism, or into a religious contemplation, the real contrasts of the material interests of every day life: on the contrary, it exposed those contrasts in all their prosaic reality. It did not construct the society of the future upon a

plan harmoniously conceived in each of its parts. It has no word of eulogy and exaltation, of invocation and of regret, for the two goddesses of philosophic mythology, justice and equality, those two goddesses who cut so sad a figure in the practical affairs of everyday life, when we observe that the history of so many centuries maliciously amuses itself by nearly always contradicting their infallible suggestions. Once more these communists, while declaring on the strength of facts which carry conviction that the mission of the proletarians is to be the grave diggers of the bourgeoisie, still recognize the latter as the author of a social form which represents extensively and intensively an important stage of progress, and which alone can furnish the field for the new struggles which already give promise of a happy issue for the proletariat. Never was funeral oration so magnificent. There is in these praises addressed to the bourgeoisie a certain tragical humor,—they have been compared to dithyrambics.

The negative and antithetical definitions of other forms of socialism then current, which have often re-appeared since, even up to the present time, although they are fundamentally beyond criticism both in their form and their aim, nevertheless, do not pretend to be and are not the real history of socialism; they furnish neither its outlines nor its plan for him who would write it. History in reality does not rest upon the distinction between the true and the false, the just and the unjust and still less

upon the more abstract antithesis between the possible and the real as if the things were on one side and on another side were their shadows and their reflections in ideas. History is all of a piece, and it rests upon the process of formation and transformation of society; and that evidently in a fashion altogether objective and independent of our approval or disapproval. It is a dynamic of a special class to speak like the positivists who are so dainty with expressions of this sort but are often dominated by the new phrases which they have put out. The different socialist forms of thought and action which have appeared and disappeared in the course of the centuries, so different in their causes, their aspects, and their effects, are all to be studied and explained by the specific and complex conditions of the social life in which they were produced. Upon a close examination it is seen that they do not form one single whole of continuous process because the series is frequently interrupted by changes in the social fabric and by the disappearance and breaking off of the tradition. It is only since the French Revolution that socialism presents a certain unity of process, which appears more evident since 1830 with the definite political supremacy of the capitalist class in France and England and which finally becomes obvious, we might say even palpable, since the rise of the International. Upon this road the Manifesto stands like a colossal guide post bearing a double inscription: on one side the first sketch of the new doctrine which has now made the circle of

the world; on the other, the definition of its relations to the forms which it excludes, without giving, however, any historic account of them.

The vital part, the essence, the distinctive character of this work are all contained in the new conception of history which permeates it and which in it is partially explained and developed. By the aid of this conception communism, ceasing to be a hope, an aspiration, a remembrance, a conjecture, an expedient, found for the first time its adequate expression in the realization of its very necessity, that is to say, in the realization that it is the outcome and the solution of the struggles of existing classes. These struggles have varied according to times and places and out of them history has developed; but, they are all reduced in our days to the single struggle between the capitalist bourgeoisie and the workingmen inevitably forced into the ranks of the proletariat. The Manifesto gives the genesis of this struggle; it details its evolutionary rhythm, and predicts its final result.

In that conception of history is embodied the whole doctrine of scientific communism. From that moment the theoretical adversaries of socialism have no longer had to discuss the abstract possibility of the democratic socialization of the means of production;* as if it were possible in this question to

* It is better to use the expression "democratic socialization of the means of production" than that of "collective property" because the latter implies a certain theoretical error in that, to begin with, it substitutes for the real econ-

rest their judgment upon inductions based upon the general and common aptitudes of what they characterize as human nature. Thenceforth, the question was to recognize, or not to recognize, in the course of human events the necessity which stands over and above our sympathy and our subjective assent. Is or is not society in the countries most advanced in civilization organized in such a way that it will pass into communism by the laws inherent in its own future, once conceding its present economic structure and the friction which it necessarily produces within itself, and which will end by breaking and dissolving it? That is the subject of all discussion since the appearance of this theory and thence follows also the rule of conduct which imposes itself upon the action of the socialist parties whether they be composed of proletarians alone or whether they have in their ranks men who have come out from the other classes and who join as volunteers the army of the proletariat.

That is why we voluntarily accept the epithet of scientific, provided we do not thus confuse ourselves with the positivists, sometimes embarrassing guests, who assume to themselves a monopoly of science; we do not seek to maintain an abstract and generic

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omic fact a juridical expression and moreover in the mind of more than one it is confused with the increase of monopolies, with the increasing *statization* of public utilities and with all the other fantasmagoria of the ever recurring State socialism, the whole effect of which is to increase the economic means of oppression in the hands of the oppressing class.

thesis like lawyers or sophists, and we do not plume ourselves on demonstrating the reasonableness of our aims. Our intentions are nothing less than the theoretical expression and the practical explanation of the data offered us by the interpretation of the process which is being accomplished among us and about us and which has its whole existence in the objective relations of social life of which we are the subject and the object, the cause and the effect. Our aims are rational, not because they are founded on arguments drawn from the reasoning of reason, but because they are derived from the objective study of things, that is to say, from the explanation of their process, which is not, and which cannot be, a result of our will but which on the contrary triumphs over our will and subdues it.

Not one of the previous or subsequent works of the authors of the Manifesto themselves, although they have a much more considerable scientific leaning, can replace the Manifesto or have the same specific efficacy. It gives us in its classic simplicity the true expression of this situation; the modern proletariat exists, takes its stand, grows and develops in contemporary history as the concrete subject, the positive force whose necessarily revolutionary action must find in communism its necessary outcome. And that is why this work while giving a theoretical base to its prediction and expressing it in brief, rapid and concise formulae, forms a storehouse, or rather an inexhaustible mine of embryonic thoughts which the reader may fertilize and multi-

ply indefinitely; it preserves all the original and originating force of the thing which is but lately born and which has not yet left the field of its production. This observation is intended especially for those who applying a learned ignorance, when they are not humbugs, charlatans, or amiable dilettanti, give to the doctrine of critical communism precursors, patrons, allies and masters of every class without any respect for common sense and the most vulgar chronology. Or again, they try to bring back our materialistic conception of history into the theory of universal evolution which to the minds of many is but a new metaphor of a new metaphysics. Or again they seek in this doctrine a derivative of Darwinism which is an analogous theory only in a certain point of view and in a very broad sense; or again they have the condescension to favor us with the alliance or the patronage of that positive philosophy which extends from Comte, that degenerate and reactionary disciple of the genial Saint-Simon, to Spencer, that quintessence of anarchical capitalism, which is to say that they wish to give us for allies our most open adversaries.

It is to its origin that this work owes its fertilizing power, its classic strength, and the fact that it has given in so few pages the synthesis of so many series and groups of ideas.*

* Twenty-five octavo pages in the original edition (London, February, 1848) for a copy of which I am indebted to the special kindness of Engels. I should say here in

It is the work of two Germans, but it is not either in its form or its basis the expression of personal opinion. It contains no trace of the imprecations, or the anxieties, or the bitterness familiar to all political refuges and to all those who have voluntarily abandoned their country to breathe elsewhere freer air. Neither do we find in it the direct reproduction of the conditions of their own country, then in a deplorable political state and which could not be compared to those of France and England socially and economically, except as regards certain portions of their territory. They brought to their work, on the contrary, the philosophic thought which alone had placed and maintained their country upon the level of contemporary history:—this philosophic thought which in their hands was undergoing that important transformation which permitted materialism, already renewed by Feuerbach combined with dialectics, to embrace and understand the movement of history in its most secret and until then unexplored causes,—unexplored because hidden and difficult to observe. Both were communists and revolutionists, but they were so neither by instinct, by impulse nor by passion. They had elaborated an entirely new criticism of economic science

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passing that I have resisted the temptation to affix any bibliographical notes, references and citations, for I should then have been making a work of scholarship, or a book, rather than a simple essay. I hope the reader will take my word for it that there are in this essay no allusions, or statements of fact or opinion, which I could not substantiate with authorities.

and they had understood the connection and the historic meaning of the proletarian movement on both sides of the Channel, in France and in England, before they were called to give in the Manifesto the programme and the doctrine of the Communist League. This had its center in London and numerous branches on the continent; it had behind it a life and development of its own.

Engels had already published a critical essay in which passing over all subjective and one-sided corrections he brought out for the first time in an objective fashion the criticism of political economy and of the antitheses inherent in the data and the concepts of that economy itself, and he had become celebrated by the publication of a book on the condition of the English working class which was the first attempt to represent the movements of the working class as the result of the workings of the forces and means of production.* Marx, in the few years preceding, had become known as a radical publicist in Germany, Paris and Brussels. He had conceived the first rudiments of the materialistic conception of history. He had made a theoretically victorious criticism of the hypotheses of Proudhon and the deductions from his doctrine, and had given the first precise explanation of the origin of surplus value as a consequence of the purchase and the use

* The "Umrisse zu einer Kritik der National-oekonomie" appeared in the German-French Year Book, Paris, 1844, pp. 85-114; and his book on "The Condition of the Working Class in England" at Leipzig in 1845.

of labor power, that is to say the first germ of the conceptions which were later demonstrated and explained in their connection and their details in Capital. Both men were in touch with the revolutionists of the different countries of Europe, notably France, Belgium and England; their Manifesto was not the expression of their personal theory, but the doctrine of a party whose spirit, aim and activity already formed the International Workingmen's Association.

These are the beginnings of modern socialism. We find there the line which separates it from all the rest.

The Communist League grew out of the *League of the Just;* the latter in its turn had been formed with a clear consciousness of its proletarian aims through a gradual specialization of the generic group of the refugees, the exiles. As a type, bearing within itself in an embryonic design the form of all the later socialist and proletarian movements, it had traversed the different phases of conspiracy and of equalitarian socialism. It was metaphysical with Gruen and utopian with Weitling. Having its principal seat at London it was interested in the Chartist movement and had had some influence over it. This movement showed by its disordered character, because it was neither the fruit of a premeditated experience, nor the embodiment of a conspiracy or of a sect, how painful and difficult was the formation of a proletarian political party. The

socialist tendency was not manifested in Chartism until the movement was near its end and was nearly finished (though Jones and Horner can never be forgotten). The *League* everywhere carried an odor of revolution, both because the thing was in the air and because its instinct and method of procedure tended that way: and as long as the revolution was bursting forth effectively, it provided itself, thanks to the new doctrine of the Manifesto, with an instrument of orientation which was at the same time a weapon for combat. In fact, already international, both by the quality and differences of origin of its members, and still more by the result of the instinct and devotion of all, it took its place in the general movement of political life as the clear and definite precursor of all that can to-day be called modern socialism, if by modern we mean not the simple fact of extrinsic chronology but an index of the internal or organic process of society.

A long interruption from 1852 to 1864 which was the period of political reaction and at the same time that of the disappearance, the dispersion and the absorption of the old socialist schools, separates the International of the *Arbeiterbildungsverein* of London, from the International properly so called, which, from 1864 to 1873, strove to put unity into the struggle of the proletariat of Europe and America. The action of the proletariat had other interruptions especially in France, and with the exception of Germany, from the dissolution of the International of glorious memory up to the new In-

ternational which lives to-day through other means and which is developing in other ways, both of them adapted to the political situation in which we live, and based upon riper experience. But just as the survivors of those who in December, 1847, discussed and accepted the new doctrine, have re-appeared on the public scene in the great International, and later again in the new International, the Manifesto itself has also re-appeared little by little and has made the tour of the world in all the languages of the civilized countries, something which it promised to do but could not do at the time of its first appearance.

There was our real point of departure; there were our real precursors. They marched before all the others, early in the day, with a step rapid but sure, over this exact road which we were to traverse and which we are traversing in reality. It is not proper to give the name of our precursors to those who followed ways which they later had to abandon, or to those who, to speak without metaphor, formulated doctrines and started movements, doubtless explicable by the times and circumstances of their birth, but which were later outgrown by the doctrine of critical communism, which is the theory of the proletarian revolution. This does not mean that these doctrines and these attempts were accidental, useless and superfluous phenomena. There is nothing irrational in the historic course of things because nothing comes into existence without reason, and thus there is nothing superfluous. We cannot even

to-day arrive at a perfect understanding of critical communism without mentally retracing these doctrines and following the processes of their appearance and disappearance. In fact these doctrines have not only passed, they have been intrinsically outgrown both by reason of the change in the conditions of society and by reason of the more exact understanding of the laws upon which rest its formation and its process.

The moment at which they enter into the past, that is to say, that at which they are intrinsically outgrown, is precisely that of the appearance of the Manifesto. As the first index of the genesis of modern socialism, this writing, which gives only the most general and the most easily accessible features of its teaching, bears within itself traces of the historic field within which it is born, which was that of France, England and Germany. Its field for propaganda and diffusion has since become wider and wider, and it is henceforth as vast as the civilized world. In all countries in which the tendency to communism has developed through antagonisms under aspects different but every day more evident between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the process of its first formation is wholly or partly repeated over and over. The proletarian parties which are formed little by little have traversed anew the stages of formation which their precursors traversed at first; but this process has become from country to country and from year to year always more rapid by reason of the greater evidence, the

pressing necessity and energy of the antagonisms, and because it is easier to assimilate a doctrine and a tendency than to create both for the first time. Our co-workers of 50 years ago were also from this point of view international, since by their example they started the proletariat of the different nations upon the general march which labor must accomplish.

But the perfect theoretical knowledge of socialism to-day, as before, and as it always will be, lies in the understanding of its historic necessity, that is to say, in the consciousness of the manner of its genesis; and this is precisely reflected, as in a limited field of observation and in a hasty example, in the formation of the Manifesto. It was intended for a weapon of war and thus it bears upon its own exterior the traces of its origin. It contains more substantial declarations than demonstrations. The demonstration rests entirely in the imperative force of its necessity. But we may retrace the process of this formation and to retrace it is to understand truly the doctrine of the Manifesto. There is an analysis which while separating in theory the factors of an organism destroys them in so far as they are elements contributing to the unity of the whole. But there is another analysis, and this alone permits us to understand history, which only distinguishes and separates the elements to find again in them the objective necessity of their co-operation toward the total result.

It is now a current opinion that modern socialism is a normal and thus an inevitable product of history. Its political action, which may in future involve delays and set-backs but never henceforth a total absorption, began with the *International*. Nevertheless the Manifesto precedes it. Its teaching is of prime importance in the light which it throws on the proletarian movement, which movement indeed had its birth and development independently of any doctrine. It is also more than this light. Critical communism dates from the moment when the proletarian movement is not merely a result of social conditions, but when it has already strength enough to understand that these conditions can be changed and to discern what means can modify them and in what direction. It was not enough to say that socialism was a result of history. It was also necessary to understand the intrinsic causes of this outcome and to what all its activity tended. This affirmation, that the proletariat is a necessary result of modern society, has for its mission to succeed the bourgeoisie, and to succeed it as the producing force of a new social order in which class antagonisms shall disappear, makes of the Manifesto a characteristic epoch in the general course of history. It is a revolution—but not in the sense of an apocalypse or a promised millennium. It is the scientific and reflected revelation of the way which our *civil society* is traversing (if the shade of Fourier will pardon me!).

The Manifesto thus gives us the inside history of

its origin and thereby justifies its doctrine and at the same time explains its singular effect and its wonderful efficacy. Without losing ourselves in details, here are the series and groups of elements which, reunited and combined in this rapid and exact synthesis, give us the clue to all the later development of scientific socialism.

The immediate, direct and appreciable material is given by France and England which had already had since 1830 a working-class movement which sometimes resembles and sometimes differentiates itself from the other revolutionary movements and which extended from instinctive revolt to the practical aims of the political parties (Chartism and Social Democracy for example) and gave birth to different temporary and perishable forms of communism and semi-communism like that to which the name of socialism was then given.

To recognize in these movements no longer the fugitive phenomenon of meteoric disturbances but a new social fact, there was need of a theory which should explain them,—and a theory which should not be a simple complement of the democratic tradition nor the subjective correction of the disadvantages, thenceforth recognized, of the economy of competition: although many were then concerned with this. This new theory was the personal work of Marx and Engels. They carried over the conception of historical progress through the process of antitheses from the abstract form, which

the Hegelian dialectic had already described in its most general features, to the concrete explanation of the class struggle; and in this historic movement where it had been supposed that we observed the passage from one form of ideas to another form they saw for the first time the transition from one form of social anatomy to another, that is from one form of economic production to another form.

This historic conception, which gave a theoretic form to this necessity of the *new social revolution* more or less explicit in the instinctive consciousness of the proletariat and in its passionate and spontaneous movements, recognizing the intrinsic and imminent necessity of the revolution, changed the concept of it. That which the sects of conspirators had regarded as belonging to the domain of the will and capable of being constructed at pleasure, became a simple process which might be favored, sustained and assisted. The revolution became the object of a policy the conditions of which are given by the complex situation of society; it therefore became a result which the proletariat must attain through struggles and various means of organization which the old tactics of revolts had not yet imagined. And this because the proletariat is not an accessory and auxiliary means, an excrescence, an evil, which can be eliminated from the society in which we are living but because it is its substratum, its essential condition, its inevitable effect and in turn the cause which preserves and maintains society itself; and thus it cannot emancipate itself without at the same

time emancipating every one, that is to say, revolutionizing completely the form of production.

Just as the *League of the Just* had become *The Communist League* by stripping itself of the forms of symbolism and conspiracy and adopting little by little the means of propaganda and of political action from and after the check attending the insurrection of Barbès and Blanqui (1839), so likewise the new doctrine, which the *League* accepted and made its own, definitely abandoned the ideas which inspired the action of conspiracies, and conceived as the outcome and objective result of a process, that which the conspirators believed to be the result of a pre-determined plan or the emanation from their heroism.

At that point begins a new ascending line in the order of facts and another connection of concepts and of doctrines.

The communism of conspiracy, the Blanquism of that time, carries us up through Buonarotti and also through Bazard and the "Carbonari" to the conspiracy of Baboeuf, a true hero of ancient tragedy who hurled himself against fate because there was no connection between his aim and the economic condition of the moment, and he was as yet incapable of bringing upon the political scene a proletariat having a broad class consciousness. From Baboeuf and certain less known elements of the Jacobin period, past Boissel and Fauchet we ascend to the intuitive Morelly and to the original and

versatile Mably and if you please to the chaotic *Testament* of the *curé* Meslier, an instinctive and violent rebellion of "good sense" against the savage oppression endured by the unhappy peasant.

These precursors of the socialism of violence, protest and conspiracy were all equalitarians; as were also most of the conspirators. Thus by a singular but inevitable error they took for a weapon of combat, interpreting it and generalizing it, that same doctrine of equality which developing as a *natural right* parallel to the formation of the economic theory, had become an instrument in the hands of the bourgeoisie which was winning step by step its present position to transform the society of privilege into that of liberalism, free exchange and the civil code.*

Following this immediate deduction which at bottom was a simple illusion, that all men being equal in nature should also be equal in their enjoyments, it was thought that the appeal to reason carried with it all the elements of propaganda and persuasion, and that the rapid, immediate and violent taking possession of the exterior instruments of

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* In these last years many jurists have thought they found in the re-adjustment of the civil Code a practical means for ameliorating the condition of the proletariat. But why have they not asked the pope to become the head of the free thought league? The most delightful of these is that Italian author who occupying himself with the class struggle asks that by the side of the code which establishes the rights of capital another be elaborated which should guarantee the rights of labor.

political power was the only means to set to right those who resisted.

But whence come and how persist all these inequalities which appear so irrational in the light of a concept of justice so simple and so elementary? The Manifesto was the clear negation of the principle of equality understood so naively and so clumsily. While proclaiming as inevitable the abolition of classes in the future form of collective production, it explains to us the necessity, the birth and the development of these very classes as a fact which is not an exception, or a derogation of an abstract principle, but the very process of history.

Even as the modern proletariat involves the bourgeoisie, so the latter cannot exist without the former. And both are the result of a process of formation which rests altogether upon the new mode of production of the objects necessary to life, that is to say, which rests altogether upon the manner of economic production. The bourgeois society grew out of the corporative and feudal society and it grew out of it through struggle and revolution in order to take possession of the instruments and means of production which all culminate in the formation, the development and the multiplication of capital. To describe the origin and the progress of the bourgeoisie in its different phases, to explain its successes in the colossal development of technique and in the conquest of the world market, and to point out the political transformations which followed it, which are the expression, the defense and

the result of these conquests is, at the same time, to write the history of the proletariat. The latter in its present condition is inherent in the epoch of bourgeois society and it has had, it has, and will have as many phases as that society itself up to the time of its extinction. The antithesis of rich and poor, of happy and unhappy, of oppressors and oppressed is not something accidental which can easily be put on one side as was believed by the enthusiasts of justice. Still further it is a fact of necessary correlation, once granted the directing principle of the present form of production which makes the wageworker a necessity. This necessity is double. Capital can only take possession of production by converting laborers into proletarians and it cannot continue to live, to be fruitful, to accumulate, to multiply itself and to transform itself except on the condition of paying wages to those whom it has made proletarians. The latter, on their side, can only live and reproduce their kind on the condition of selling themselves as labor power, the use of which is left to the discretion, that is to say, to the good pleasure of the possessors of capital. The harmony between capital and labor is wholly contained in this fact that labor is the living force by which the proletarians continually put in motion and reproduce by adding to it the labor accumulated in the capital. This connection resulting from a development which is the whole inner essence of modern history, if it gives the key to comprehend the true reason of the new class struggle

of which the communist conception has become the expression, is of such a nature that no sentimental protest, no argument based on justice can resolve it and disentangle it.

It is for these reasons which I have explained here as simply as possible that equalitarian communism remained vanquished. Its practical powerlessness blended with its theoretical inability to account for the causes of the wrongs or of the inequalities which it desired, bravely or stupidly, to destroy or eliminate at a blow.

To understand history became thenceforth the principal task of the theorists of communism. How could a cherished ideal be still opposed to the hard reality of history? Communism is not the natural and necessary state of human life in all times and in all places and the whole course of historic formations cannot be considered as a series of deviations and wanderings. One does not reach communism nor return to it by Spartan abnegation or Christian resignation. It can be, still more it must be and it will be the consequence of the dissolution of our capitalist society. But the dissolution cannot be inoculated into it artificially nor imported from without. It will dissolve by its own weight as Machiavelli would say. It will disappear as a form of production which engenders of itself and in itself the constant and increasing rebellion of its productive forces against the conditions (juridical and political) of production and it continues to live only

by augmenting (through competition which engenders crises, and by a bewildering extension of its sphere of action) the intrinsic conditions of its inevitable death. The death of a social form like that which comes from natural death in any other branch of science becomes a *physiological case.*

The Manifesto did not make, and it was not its part to make the picture of a future society. It told how our present society will dissolve by the progressive dynamics of its forces. To make this understood it was necessary above all to explain the development of the bourgeoisie and this was done in rapid sketches, a model philosophy of history, which can be retouched, completed and developed, but which cannot be corrected.*

Saint-Simon and Fourier, although neither their ideas nor the general trend of their development were accepted, found their justification. Idealists both, they had by their heroic vision transcended the "liberal" epoch which in their horizon had its culminating point at the epoch of the French revolution. The former in his interpretation of history substituted social physics for economic law and politics, and in spite of many idealistic and positivistic uncertainties, he almost discovered the genesis of the third estate. The other, ignorant of details which were still unknown or neglected, in the exuberance of his undisciplined spirit imagined a great chain of historic epochs vaguely distinguished

* This development has been given in Marx's Capital which can be considered as a philosophy of history.

by certain indications of the directing principle of the forms of production and distribution. He thereupon proposed to himself to construct a society in which the existing antitheses should disappear. From all these antitheses he discovered by a flash of genius and he, more than any other, developed "the vicious circle of production"; he there unconsciously reached the position of Sismondi, who at the same epoch, but with other intentions and along different roads, studying crises and denouncing the disadvantages of the large scale industry and of unbridled competition, announced the collapse of the newly established economic science. From the summit of his serene meditation on the future world of the harmonians he looked down with a serene contempt upon the misery of civilization and unmoved wrote the satire of history. Ignorant both, because idealists, of the bitter struggle which the proletariat is called upon to maintain before putting an end to the epoch of exploitation and of antitheses, they arrived through a subjective necessity at their conclusions, in the one case scheme-making, in the other utopianism. But as by divination they foresaw some of the direct principles of a society without antitheses. The former reached a clear conception of the technical government of society in which should disappear the domination of man over man, and the other divined, foresaw and prophesied along with the extravagances of his luxuriant imagination a great number of the important traits of the psychology and pedagogy of that future society in which ac-

cording to the expression of the Manifesto, "the free development of each is the condition of the free development of all."

Saint-Simonism had already disappeared when the Manifesto appeared. Fourierism, on the contrary, was flourishing in France and in consequence of its nature not as a party but as a school.

When the school attempted to realize its utopia by means of the law, the Parisian proletarians had already been beaten in those days of June by that bourgeoisie which through this victory was preparing a master for itself: it was a military adventurer whose power lasted twenty years.

It is not in the name of a school, but as the promise, the threat, and the desire of a party that the new doctrine of critical communism presented itself. Its authors and its adherents did not feed upon the utopian manufacture of the future but their minds were full of the experience and the necessity of the present. They united with the proletarians whom instinct, not as yet fortified by experience, impelled to overthrow, at Paris and in England, the rule of the bourgeois class with a rapidity of movement not guided by well-considered tactics. These communists disseminated their revolutionary ideas in Germany: they were the defenders of the June martyrs, and they had in the Neue Rheinische Zeitung a political organ, extracts from which, reproduced occasionally after so many years,

still carry authority.* After the disappearance of the historic situations which in 1848 had pushed the proletarians to the front of the political stage, the doctrines of the Manifesto no longer found either a foundation or a field for diffusion. Many years were required before it circulated again and that because many years were required before the proletariat could re-appear by other roads and under other methods as a political force upon the scene, making of this doctrine its intellectual organ and directing its course by it.

But from the day when the doctrine appeared it made its anticipated criticism of that *socialismus vulgaris* which was flourishing in Europe and especially in France from the coup d'Etat to the International; the latter moreover in its short period of life had not time to vanquish and eliminate it. This vulgar socialism found its intellectual food (when nothing even more incoherent and chaotic was at hand) in the doctrine and especially in the paradoxes of Proudhon who had already been vanquished theoretically by Marx† but who was not

* It was not until after the publication of the Italian edition of this essay that I had at my disposal for some months a complete collection of the Neue Rheinische Zeitung for which I owe hearty thanks to the Partei-Archiv of Berlin. The impression derived from this reading surpasses expectation. It is desirable either that this journal which now has become very rare, be reprinted entire or that the most important articles and letters in it be reproduced.

† Misere de la Philosophie, by Karl Marx, Paris and Brussels, 1847; new edition, Paris, Giard and Briere, 1896.

vanquished practically until the time of the Commune when his disciples, and it was a salutary lesson in affairs, were forced to act in opposition to their own doctrines and those of their master.

From the time of its appearance this new communist doctrine carried an implied criticism of all forms of State socialism from Louis Blanc to Lassalle. This State socialism, although mingled with revolutionary doctrines, was then summed up in the empty dream, in the abracadabra, of the *Right to Work*. This is an insidious formula if it implies a demand addressed to a government even of revolutionary bourgeois. It is an economic absurdity if by it is meant to suppress the unemployment which ensues upon the variations of wages, that is to say upon the conditions of competition. It may be a tool for politicians, if it serves as an expedient to calm a shapeless mass of unorganized proletarians. This is very evident for any one who conceives clearly the course of a victorious proletarian revolution which cannot proceed to the socialization of the means of production by taking possession of them, that is to say, which cannot arrive at the economic form in which there is neither merchandise nor wage labor and in which the right to work and the duty of working are one and the same, mingled in the common necessity of labor for all.

The mirage of the right to work ended in the tragedy of June. The parliamentary discussion of which it was the object in the sequel was nothing but a parody. Lamartine, that tearful rhetorician,

that great man for all proper occasions, had pronounced the last, or the next to the last of his celebrated phrases, "Catastrophes are the experiences of nations," and that sufficed for the irony of history.

The brevity and simplicity of the Manifesto were wholly foreign to the insinuating rhetoric of faith or creed. It was of the utmost inclusiveness by virtue of the many ideas which it for the first time reduced to a system and it was a series of germs capable of an immense development. But it was not, and it did not pretend to be a code of socialism, a catechism of critical communism, or the handbook of the proletarian revolution. We may leave its "quintessence" to the illustrious Dr. Schaeffle, to whom also we willingly leave the famous phrase, "The social question is a question of the stomach."

The "ventre" of Dr. Schaeffle has for long years cut a fine enough figure in the world to the great advantage of the dilettanti in socialism and to the delight of the politicians. Critical communism, in reality, scarcely begun with the Manifesto it needed to develop and it has developed effectively.

The sum total of the teachings customarily designated by the name of "Marxism" did not arrive at maturity before the years 1860-1870. It is certainly a long step from the little work Wage Labor and Capital* in which is seen for the first time in

*This is made up of articles which appeared in 1849 in the Neue Rheinische Zeitung and which reproduced the

precise terms how from the purchase and the use of the labor-commodity is obtained a product superior to the cost of production, this being the clue to the question of surplus value—it is a long step from this to the complex and multiple developments of "Capital." This book goes exhaustively into the genesis of the bourgeois epoch in all its inner economic structure, and intellectually it transcends that epoch because it explains its course, its particular laws and the antitheses which it organically produces and which organically dissolve it.

It is a long step also from the proletarian movement which succumbed in 1848 to the present proletarian movement which through great difficulties after having re-appeared on the political scene has developed with continuity and deliberation. Until a few years ago this regularity of the forward march of the proletariat was observed and admired only in Germany. The social democracy there had normally increased as upon its own field (from the Workingmen's Conference of Nuremburg, 1868, to our day). But since then the same phenomenon has asserted itself in other countries, under various forms.

In this broad development of Marxism and in this increase of the proletarian movement in the limited forms of political action, has there not been, as some assert, an alteration from the militant char-

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lectures given by Marx to the German Workingmen's Circle of Brussels in 1847. It has since been published as a propaganda leaflet.

acter of the original form of critical communism? Has there not been a passing from revolution to the self-styled evolution? Has there not been an acquiescence of the revolutionary spirit in the exigencies of the reform movement?

These reflections and these objections have arisen and arise continually both among the most enthusiastic and most passionate of the socialists and among the adversaries of socialism whose interest it is to give an appearance of uniformity to the special defeats, checks and delays, so as to affirm that communism has no future.

Whoever compares the present proletarian movement and its varied and complicated course with the impression left by the Manifesto when one reads it without being provided with knowledge from other sources, may easily believe that there was something juvenile and premature in the confident boldness of those communists of fifty years ago. There is in them the sound as of a battle cry and an echo of the vibrant eloquence of some of the orators of Chartism; there is the declaration of a new '93 with no room left for a new Thermidor.

And Thermidor has re-appeared several times since in various forms, more or less explicit or disguised, and their authors have been since 1848 French ex-radicals, or Italian ex-patriots, or German bureaucrats, adorers of the god State and practically slaves of the god Mammon, English parliamentarians broken by the artifices of the art of gov-

ernment, or even politicians under the guise of anarchists. Many people believe that the constellation of Thermidor is destined never to disappear from the heaven of history, or to speak in a more prosaic fashion, that liberalism, that is to say a society where men are equal only in law, marks the extreme limit of human evolution beyond which nothing remains but a return backward. That is the opinion of all those who see in the progressive extension of the bourgeois form over the whole world the reason and the end of all progress. Whether they are optimists or pessimists here are, for them, the columns of Hercules of the human race. Often it happens that this sentiment in its pessimistic form operates unconsciously upon some of those, who with others unclassified, go to swell the ranks of anarchism.

There are others who go further and who theorize upon the objective improbabilities of the assertions of critical communism. That affirmation of the Manifesto that the reduction of all class struggles to a single one carries within itself the necessity of the proletarian revolution, would seem to them intrinsically false. That doctrine would be without foundation because it assumes to draw a theoretical deduction and a practical rule of conduct from the prevision of a fact which, according to these adversaries, would be a simple theoretical point which might be displaced and set ahead indefinitely. The assumed inevitable collision between the productive forces and the form of production would never take place because it is reduced, as they claim, to an in-

finite number of particular cases of friction, because it multiplies itself into the partial collisions of economic competition, and because it meets with checks and hindrances in the expedients and attacks of the governmental art. In other words, our present society, instead of breaking up and dissolving would in a continuous fashion repair the evils which it produced. Every proletarian movement which is not repressed by violence as was that of June, 1848, and that of May, 1871, would perish of slow exhaustion as happened with Chartism which ended in trade unionism, the war horse of this fashion of arguing, the honor and glory of the economists and of the vulgar sociologists. Every modern proletarian movement would be regarded as meteoric and not organic, it would be a disturbance and not a process, and according to these critics, in spite of ourselves, we should be still utopians.

The historic forecast which is found in the doctrine of the Manifesto and which critical communism has since developed by a broad and detailed analysis of the actual world, has certainly taken on by reason of the circumstances in which it was produced a warlike appearance and a very aggressive form. But it did not imply, any more than it impies now, either a chronological datum or a prophetic picture of the social organization like those in the apocalypses and the ancient prophesies.

The heroic Father Dolcino did not re-appear with the prophetic war cry of Joachino del Fiore. We

did not celebrate anew at Münster the resurrection of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. There were no more Taborites nor millenarians. Nor was there another Fourier waiting in his house at a fixed hour year after year for the "candidate of humanity." Nor again, was there an initiator of a new life, beginning with artificial means to create the first nucleus of an association proposing to make man over, as was the case with Beller, Owen, Cabet, and the enterprise of the Fourierites in Texas, which was the tomb of utopianism, marked by a singular epitaph: the dumbness which succeeded the fiery eloquence of Considerant. Neither is there here a sect which retires modestly and timidly from the world in order to celebrate in a closed circle the perfect idea of communism as in the socialist colonies of America.

Here, on the contrary, in the doctrine of critical communism, it is society as a whole which at a moment of its general process discovers the cause of its destined course and at a critical point asserts itself to proclaim the laws of its movement. The foresight indicated by the Manifesto was not chronological, it was not a prophecy nor a promise, but a morphological prevision.

Beneath the noise of the passions over which our daily conversation extends itself, beyond the visible movements of the persons who formed the material at which the historians stop, beyond the juridical and political apparel of our civil society, far enough from the meanings which religion and art give to

life, there remains, grows and develops the elementary structure of society which supports all the rest. The anatomical study of this underlying structure is economics. And as human society has several times changed, partially or entirely, in its most visible exterior form, or in its ideological, religious or artistic manifestations, we must first find the cause and the reason of these changes, the only ones which historians relate, in the transformations more hidden, and at first less visible, of the economic *processus* of this structure. We must set ourselves to the study of the differences which exist between the various forms of production when we have to deal with historic epochs clearly distinct and properly designated; and when we have to explain the succession of these forms, the replacing of one by the other, we must study the causes of erosion, and of the destruction of the form which disappears; and finally when we wish to understand the historic fact determined and concrete, we must study the frictions and the contrasts which take their rise from the different currents, that is to say, the classes, their subdivisions and their intersections which characterize a given society.

When the Manifesto declared that all history up to the present time has been nothing but the history of class struggles and that these are the cause of all revolutions as also of all reactions, it did two things at the same time, it gave to communism the elements of a new doctrine and to the communists the guiding thread to discover in the confused events of poli-

tical life the conditions of the underlying economic movement.

In these last fifty years the generic foresight of a new historic era has become for socialists the delicate art of understanding in every case what it is expedient to do, because this new era is in itself in continual formation. Communism has become an art because the proletarians have become, or are on the point of becoming, a political party. The revolutionary spirit is embodied to-day in the proletarian organization. The desired union of communists and proletarians is henceforth an accomplished fact.* These last fifty years have been the ever stronger proof of the ever growing revolt of the producing forces against the forms of production. We "utopians" have no other answer to offer than this lesson from events to those who still speak of meteoric disturbances which, as they would have it, will disappear little by little and will all resolve themselves into the calm of this final epoch of civilization. And this lesson suffices.

Eleven years after the publication of the Manifesto, Marx formulated in clear and precise fashion the directing principles of the materialistic interpretation of history in the preface to a book which is the forerunner of "Capital." †

* See Chapter II. of the Manifesto.

† Zur Kritik der politischen Oekonomie, Berlin, 1859, pp. IV.-VI. of the preface. (Instead of retranslating this extract from the French I have availed myself of the as-

"The first work which I undertook for the purpose of solving the doubts which perplexed me was a critical re-examination of Hegel's Philosophy of Law. The introduction to this work appeared in the German-French Year Books, published in Paris in 1844.

My investigation ended in the conviction that legal relations and forms of government cannot be explained either by themselves or by the so-called general development of the human mind, but on the contrary, have their roots in the conditions of man's physical existence, whose totality Hegel, following the English and French writers of the eighteenth century, summed up under the name of civil society; and that the anatomy of civil society must be sought in political economy.

The study of the latter which I began at Paris was continued at Brussels whither I had betaken myself in consequence of an order of Guizot expelling me from France.

The general result which I arrived at and which, once obtained, served as a guide for my subsequent studies, can be briefly formulated as follows:

In making their livelihood together men enter into certain necessary involuntary relations with each other, industrial relations which correspond to whatever stage society has reached in the development of its material productive forces.

The totality of these industrial relations consti-

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sistance of Comrade Hitch, who has translated direct from the German of Marx. C. H. K.)

tutes the economic structure of society, the real basis upon which the legal and political superstructure is built, and to which definite forms of social consciousness correspond.

The method of producing the material livelihood determines the social, political and intellectual life process in general.

It is not men's consciousness which determines their life; on the contrary, it is their social life which determines their consciousness.

At a certain stage of their development the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the old conditions of production or, to use a legal expression, with the old property relations under which these forces have hitherto been exerted. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into fetters of production. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic basis the whole vast superstructure undergoes sooner or later a revolution.

In considering such revolutions one must constantly distinguish between the industrial revolution, to be carefully posited scientifically, which takes place in the economic conditions of production, and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophical, in short ideological, forms wherein men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. As little as we judge an individual by what he himself thinks he is, just as little can we judge such a revolutionary epoch by its own consciousness. We must rather explain this consciousness out of the

antagonisms of men's industrial life, out of the conflict existing between the forces of social production and the relations of social production.

A form of society never breaks down until all the productive forces are developed for which it affords room. New and higher relations of production are never established, until the material conditions of life to support them have been prepared in the lap of the old society itself. Therefore mankind always sets for itself only such tasks as it is able to perform; for upon close examination it will always be found that the task itself only arises where the material conditions for its solution are already at hand or are at least in process of growth.

We may in broad outlines characterize the Asiatic, the antique, the feudal and the modern capitalist methods of production as progressive epochs in the economic evolution of society.

The industrial relations arising out of the capitalistic method of production constitute the last of the antagonistic forms of social production; antagonistic not in the sense of an individual antagonism, but of an antagonism growing out of the social conditions of individuals.

But the productive forces which are developed in the lap of capitalistic society create at the same time the material conditions needed for the abolition of this antagonism. The capitalist form of society, therefore, brings to a close this prelude to the history of human society."

Marx had some years before left the political arena and he did not return to it until later with the International. The reaction had triumphed in Italy, Austria, Hungary and Germany over the patriotic, liberal or democratic revolution. The bourgeoisie on its side had overcome the proletarians of France and England. The indispensable conditions for the development of a democratic and proletarian movement suddenly disappeared. The battalion small in numbers indeed of the Manifesto communists who had taken part in the revolution and who had participated in all the acts of resistance and popular rebellion against reaction saw its activity crushed by the memorable process of Cologne. The survivors of the movement tried to make a new start at London, but soon Marx, Engels and others separated themselves from the revolutionaries and retired from the movement. The crisis was passed. A long period of repose followed. This was shown by the slow disappearance of the Chartist movement, that is to say, the proletarian movement of the country which was the spinal column of the capitalist system. History had for the moment discredited the illusions of the revolutionaries.

Before giving himself almost entirely to the long incubation of the already discovered elements of the critique of political economy, Marx illustrated in several works the history of the revolutionary period from 1848 to 1850 and especially the class struggles in France, showing thus that if the revolution in the forms which it had taken on at that moment had

not succeeded, the revolutionary theory of history was not contradicted for all that.* The suggestions given in the Manifesto found here their complete development.

Later the 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte† was the first attempt to apply the new conception of history to a series of facts contained within precise limits of time. It is extremely difficult to rise from the apparent movement to the real movement of history and to discover their intimate connection. There are indeed great difficulties in rising from the phenomena of passion, oratory, Parliaments, elections and the like to the inner social gearing to discover in the latter the different interests of the large and small bourgeois, of the peasants, the artisans, the laborers, the priests, the soldiers, the bankers, the usurers and the mob. All these interests act consciously or unconsciously, jostling each other, eliminating each other, combining and fusing, in the discordant life of civilized man.

The crisis was passed and this was precisely true in the countries which constituted the historic field from which critical communism proceeded. All

* These articles which appeared in the Neue Rheinische Politischokonomische Review, Hamburg, 1850, have recently been brought together into a pamphlet by Engels (Berlin, 1895) under the title of "Die Klassenkampfe in Frankreich 1848 bis 1850." The little work has a preface by Engels.

† Appeared for the first time in New York in 1852 in a review. Several editions have since been made in Germany. A French translation appeared in 1891 published by Delory, Lille.

that the critical communists could do was to understand the reaction in its hidden economic causes because, for the moment, to understand the reaction was to continue the work of the revolution. The same thing happened under other conditions and other forms 20 years later when Marx, in the name of the International made in the "Civil War in France" an apology for the Commune which was at the same time its objective criticism.

The heroic resignation with which Marx after 1850 abandoned political life was shown again when he retired from the International after the congress at the Hague in 1872. These two facts have their value for biography because they give glimpses of his personal character. With him, in fact, ideas, temperament, policy and thought were one and the same. But, on the other hand, these facts have a much greater bearing for us. Critical communism does not manufacture revolutions, it does not prepare insurrections, it does not furnish arms for revolts. It mingles itself with the proletarian movement, but it sees and supports that movement in the full intelligence of the connection which it has, which it can have, and which it must have, with all the relations of social life as a whole. In a word it is not a seminary in which superior officers of the proletarian revolution are trained, but it is neither more nor less than the consciousness of this revolution and especially the consciousness of its difficulties.

The proletarian movement has grown in a colossal fashion during these last thirty years. In the midst of numberless difficulties, through gains and losses, it has little by little taken on a political form. Its methods have been elaborated and gradually applied. All this is not the work of the magic action of the doctrine scattered by the persuasive virtue of written and spoken propaganda. From their first beginnings the communists had this feeling that they were the extreme left of every proletarian movement, but in proportion as the latter developed and specialized it became their necessity and duty to assist, (through the elaboration of programmes, and through their participation in the political action of the parties) in the various contingencies of the economic development and of the political situation growing out of it.

In the fifty years which separate us from the publication of the Manifesto the specialization and the complexity of the proletarian movement have become such that there is henceforth no mind capable of embracing it in its completeness, of understanding it in its details and grasping its real causes and exact relations. The single International, from 1864 to 1873, necessarily disappeared after it had fulfilled its task. The preliminary equalization of the general tendencies and of the ideas common and indispensable to all the proletariat, and no one can assume or will assume to re-constitute anything like it.

Two causes, notably, contributed in a high de-

gree to this specialization, this complexity of the proletarian movement. In many countries the bourgeoisie felt the need of putting an end in the interest of its own defense to some of the abuses which had arisen in consequence of the introduction of the industrial system. Thence arose labor legislation, or as it has been pompously called social legislation. This same bourgeoisie in its own interest or, under the pressure of circumstances has been obliged, in many countries to increase the generic conditions of liberty, and notably to extend the right of suffrage. These two circumstances have drawn the proletariat into the circle of daily political life. They have considerably increased its chance for action and the agility and suppleness thus acquired permit it to struggle with the bourgeoisie in elective assembles. And as the *processus* of things determines the *processus* of ideas, this practical multiform development of the proletariat is accompanied by a gradual development of the doctrines of critical communism, as well in the manner of understanding history or contemporary life as in the minute description of the most infinitesimal parts of economics: in a word, it has become a science.

Have we not there, some ask, a deviation from the simple and imperative doctrine of the Manifesto? Others again say, have we not lost in intensity and precision what we have gained in extension and complexity?

These questions, in my opinion, arise from an in-

exact conception of the present proletarian movement and an optical illusion as to the degree of energy and revolutionary valor of the former movements.

Whatever be the concessions that the bourgeoisie can make in the present economic order even if it be a very great reduction in the hours of labor, it always remains true that the necessity for exploitation upon which the whole present social order rests imposes limits beyond which capital as a private instrument of production has no more reason for existence. If a concession to-day can allay one form of discontent in the proletariat, the concession itself can do nothing less than to give rise to the need of new and ever increasing concessions. The need of labor legislation arose in England before the Chartist movement and it developed afterwards along with it. It had its first successes in the period which immediately followed the fall of Chartism. The principles and the reasons of this movement in their causes and their effects were studied in a critical manner by Marx in Capital and they afterwards passed, through the International, into the programmes of the different socialist parties. Finally this whole process, concentrating itself into the demand for eight hours, became with the 1st of May an international marshalling of the proletariat, and a means for estimating its progress. On the other hand, the political struggle in which the proletariat takes part democratizes its habits; still more a real

democracy takes birth which, with time, will no longer be able to adapt itself to the present political form. Being the organ of a society based on exploitation it is constituted as a bureaucratic hierarchy, as a judicial bureaucracy and a mutual aid society of the capitalists for the defense of their special privileges, the perpetual income from the public debt, the rent of land and the interest on capital in all its forms. Consequently the two facts, which according to the discontented and the hypercritical seem to make us deviate infinitely from the lines laid down by communism, become, on the contrary, new means and new conditions which confirm these lines. The apparent deviations from the revolution are, at bottom, the very thing which is hastening it.

Moreover, we must not exaggerate the significance of the revolutionary faith of the communists of fifty years ago. Given the political situation of Europe, if they had a faith, it was that they were precursors, and this they have been; they hoped that the political conditions of Italy, Austria, Hungary, Germany and Poland might approximate to modern forms, and this has happened later, in part, and through other means; if they had a hope, it was that the proletarian movement of France and England might continue to develop. The reaction which intervened upset many things and stopped more than one development which had already begun. It upset also the old revolutionary tactic, and in these

last years a new tactic has arisen. Therein lies all the change.*

The Manifesto was designed for nothing else than the first guiding thread to a science and a practice which nothing but experience and time could develop. It gives only the scheme and the rhythm of the general march of the proletarian movement.

It is perfectly evident that the communists were influenced by the experience of the two movements which they had before their eyes, that of France, and especially the Chartist movement which the manifestation of April 10th was soon to strike with paralysis. But this scheme does not fix in any invariable fashion a tactic of war, which indeed had already been made frequently. The revolutionists had often indeed explained in the form of catechism what ought to be a simple consequence of the development of events

This scheme became more vast and complex with the development and extension of the bourgeois system. The rhythm of the movement has become more varied and slower because the laboring mass has entered on the scene as a distinct, political party, which fact changes the manner and the measure of their action and consequently their movement.

* In the preface to the "Class Struggle in France in 1848-50" and elsewhere Engels treated fundamentally the objective development of the new revolutionary tactic. (It is well to remember that the first Italian edition of this essay appeared June 18th, and the second, October 15, 1895.)

Just as in view of the improvement of modern weapons the tactic of street riots has become inopportune, and just as the complexity of the modern state shows the insufficiency of a sudden capture of a municipal government to impose upon a whole people the will and the ideas of a minority, no matter how courageous and progressive, even so, on its side, the mass of the proletarians no longer holds to the word of command of a few leaders, nor does it regulate its movements by the instructions of captains who might upon the ruins of one government raise up another. The laboring mass where it has developed politically has made and is making its own democratic education. It is choosing its representatives and submitting their action to its criticism. It examines and makes its own the ideas and the propositions which these representatives submit to it. It already knows, or it begins to understand according to the situation in the various countries, that the conquest of the political power cannot and should not be made by others in its name, and especially that it cannot be the consequence of a single blow. In a word it knows, or it is beginning to understand that the dictatorship of the proletariat which shall have for its task the socialization of the means of production cannot be the work of a mass led by a few and that it must be, and that it will be, the work of the proletarians themselves when they have become in themselves and through long practice a political organization

The development and the extension of the bour-

geois system have been rapid and colossal in these last fifty years. It already invades sacred and ancient Russia and it is creating, not only in America, Australia and in India, but even in Japan, new centers of modern production, thus complicating the conditions of competition and the entanglements of the world market. The consequences of political changes have been produced, or will not be long to wait for. Equally rapid and colossal has been the progress of the proletariat. Its political education takes each day a new step toward the conquest of political power. The rebellion of the productive forces against the form of production, the struggle of living labor against accumulated labor, becomes every day more evident. The bourgeois system is henceforth upon the defensive and it reveals its decadence by this singular contradiction; the peaceful world of industry has become a colossal camp in which militarism develops. The peaceful period of industry has become by the irony of things the period of the continuous invention of new engines of war.

Socialism has forced itself into the situation. Those semi-socialists, even those charlatans who encumber with their presence the press and the meetings of our party and who often are a nuisance to us, are a tribute which vanity and ambitions of every sort render in their fashion to the new power which rises on the horizon. In spite of the foreseen antidote which scientific socialism is, the truth of which many people have not come to understand,

there is a group of quacks on the social question, all having some particular specific to eliminate such or such a social evil: land nationalization, monopoly of grains in the hands of the State, democratic taxes, statization of mortgages, general strike, etc. But social democracy eliminates all these fantasies because the consciousness of their situation leads the proletarians when once they have become familiar with the political arena to understand socialism in an integral fashion. They come to understand that they should look for only one thing, the abolition of wage labor; that there is but one form of society which renders possible and even necessary the elimination of classes,—the association which does not produce commodities, and that this form of society is no longer the State, but its opposite, that is to say, the technical and pedagogical administration of human society, the self-government of labor. Behind the Jacobins are the gigantic heroes of 1793 and their caricatures of 1848.

Social democracy! But is not that, say some, an evident attenuation of the communist doctrine as it is formulated in the Manifesto in terms so ringing and so decisive?

This is not the moment to recall that the phrase *social democracy* has had in France many significations from 1837 to 1848, all of which were based upon a vague sentimentalism. Neither is it necessary to explain how the Germans have been able in this nomenclature to sum up all the rich and vast de-

velopment of their socialism from the episode of Lassalle now passed over and transformed up to our own days. It is certain that *social democracy* can signify, has signified and signifies many things which have not been, are not, and never will be, either critical communism or the conscious march toward the proletarian revolution. It is also certain that contemporary socialism even in the countries where its development is most advanced, carries with it a great deal of dross which it throws off little by little along the road. It is certain also, in fine, that this broad designation of social democracy serves as an escutcheon and a buckler to many intruders. But here we need to fix our attention only upon certain points of capital importance.

We must insist upon the second term of the expression in order to avoid any equivocation. Democratic was the constitution of the *Communist League;* democratic was its fashion of welcoming and discussing each new teaching; democratic was its intervention in the revolution of 1848 and its participation in the rebellious resistance against the invasion of reaction; democratic finally was the very way in which the League was dissolved. In this first type of our present parties, in this first cell so to speak, of our complex organism, elastic and highly developed, there was not only the consciousness of the mission to be accomplished as precursor, but there was already the form and the method of association which alone are suitable for the first initiators of the proletarian revolution. It was no

longer a sect; that form was already, in fact, outgrown. The immediate and fantastic domination of the individual was eliminated, what predominated was a discipline which had its source in the experience of necessity and in the precise doctrine which must proceed from the reflex consciousness of this necessity. It was the same with the International, which appeared authoritarian only to those who could not make their own authority prevail in it. It must be the same, and it is so, in the working class parties and where this character is not or cannot yet be marked, the proletarian agitation still elementary and confused simply engenders illusions and is only a pretext for intrigues, and when it is not so, then we have a passover where men of understanding touch elbows with the madman and the spy; as for example the society of The International Brothers which attached itself like a parasite to the International and discredited it; or again the co-operative which degenerates into a business and sells itself to capitalists; the labor party which remains outside politics and which studies the variations of the market to introduce its tactic of strikes into the sinuosities of competition; or again a group of malcontents, for the most part social outcasts and little bourgeois, who give themselves up to speculations on socialism considered as one of the phases of political fashion. Social democracy has met all these impedimenta upon its way and it has been obliged to relieve itself of them as it will have to do again from one time to another. The art of persuasion

does not always suffice. Oftener it was necessary and it is necessary to resign ourselves and wait until the hard school of disillusion serves to instruct, which it does better than reasonings can do.

All these intrinsic difficulties of the proletarian movement, which the wily bourgeoisie oftener than not stirs up of itself and which it makes the most of, form a considerable part of the internal history of socialism during these last years.

Socialism has not found impediments merely in the general conditions of economic competition and in the resistance of the political power, but also in the very conditions of the proletarian mass and in the mechanism sometimes obscure although inevitable of its slow, varied, complex movements, often antagonistic and contradictory. That prevents many people from seeing the increasing reduction of all class struggles to the single struggle between the capitalists and the proletarianized workers.

Even as the Manifesto did not write, as the utopians did, the ethics and the psychology of the future society, just so it did not give the mechanism of that formation and of the development in which we find ourselves. It is surely enough that these few pioneers have opened the road. We must walk upon it to arrive at understanding and experience. Moreover man is distinctively the experimental animal; that is why he has a history, or rather that is why he makes his own history.

Upon this road of contemporary socialism which constitutes its development because it is its experience, we have met the mass of the peasants.

Socialism which at first kept itself practically and theoretically to the study and experience of the antagonisms between capitalists and proletarians in the circle of industrial production properly so called, has turned its activity toward that mass in which *peasant stupidity* blossoms. To capture the peasants is the question of the hour, although the quintessential Schaeffle long ago mobilized the anti-collectivist brains of the peasants for the defense of the existing order. The elimination and the capture of domestic industry by capital, the passage more and more rapid of agrarian industry into the capitalist form, the disappearance of small proprietorship, or its lessening through mortgages, the disappearance of the communal domaines, usury, taxes and militarism, all this is beginning to work miracles even in those brains assumed to be props of the existing order.

The Germans have been the pioneers in this field. They were brought to it by the very fact of their immense expansion; from the cities they have gone to the smallest centers and they thus arrive inevitably at the frontiers of the country. Their attempts will be long and difficult; this fact explains, excuses, and will excuse, the errors which have been and will be committed.* As long as the peasant shall not be

* In my opinion this is the case in France. The recent discussions of the agrarian programme submitted to the

gained over we shall always have behind us this *peasant stupidity* which unconsciously repeats, and that because it is stupid, the errors of the 18th Brumaire and the 2d of December. The development of modern society in Russia will probably proceed on parallel lines with this conquest of the country districts. When that country shall have entered into the liberal era with all its imperfections and all its disadvantages, with all the purely modern forms of exploitation and of proletarization, but also with the compensations and the advantages of the political development of the proletariat, social democracy will no longer have to fear the threat of unforeseen perils from without, and it will at the same time have triumphed over the internal perils by the capture of the peasants.

The example of Italy is instructive. This country after having opened the capitalist era dropped out for several centuries from the current history. It is a typical case of decadence which can be studied in a precise fashion from original documents in all its phases. It partly returned into history at the time of the Napoleonic domination. It reconquered its unity and became a modern state after the period of the reaction and conspiracies, and under circumstances known to all, and Italy has ended by having all the vices of parliamentarism, of militarism and of finance without having at the same

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deliberations of the social democracy in Germany confirm the reasons which I have indicated.

time the forms of modern production and the resulting capacity for competition on equal terms. It cannot compete with countries where industry is more advanced by reason of the absolute lack of coal and scarcity of iron, the lack of technical ability, —and it is waiting, or hoping now, that the application of electricity may permit it to regain the time lost. It is this which gave the impulse to different attempts from Biella to Schio. A modern state in a society almost exclusively agricultural and in a country where agriculture is in great part backward, it is that which gives birth to this general sentiment of universal discontent.

Thence come the incoherence and the inconsistency of the parties, the rapid oscillations from demagogy to dictatorship, the mob, the multitude, the infinite army of the parasites of politics, the makers of fantastic projects. This singular social spectacle of a development prevented, retarded, embarrassed and thus uncertain, is brought out in bold relief by a penetrating spirit which, if it is not always the fruit and the expression of a modern, broad and real culture nevertheless bears within itself as the relic of an excellent civilization the mark of great cerebral refinement. Italy has not been for reasons easy to guess a suitable field for the indigenous formation of socialist ideas and tendencies. The Italian Philippe Buonaroti, at first the friend of the younger Robespierre, become the companion of Babeuf and later attempted to re-establish Babeufism in France, after 1830. Socialism made its first appear-

ance in Italy at the time of the International, in the confused and incoherent form of Bakuninism; it was not, moreover, a labor movement, but it was the work of the small bourgeois and instinctive revolutionists.* In these last years socialism has fixed itself in a form which *almost* reproduces the general type of *social democracy*.† Now in Italy the first sign of life which the proletariat gave is in the shape of the rising of the Sicilian peasants followed by other revolts of the same kind on the continent to which others will perhaps succeed in the future. Is it not very significant?

After this incursion into the history of contemporary socialism we gladly return to our precursors of fifty years ago, who put on record in the Manifesto how they took possession of an advance post on the road of progress. And that is true not merely of the theorizers, that is to say, Marx and Engels. Both of these men would have exercised, under other circumstances and at all times either by tongue or pen, a considerable influence over politics and science

* It was otherwise in Germany. After 1830 socialism was imported there and became a current literature; it underwent philosophical alterations of which Gruen was the typical representative. But already before the *new doctrine* socialism had received a characteristic imprint which was proletarian, thanks to the propaganda and the writings of Weitling. As Marx said in 1844 in the Paris Vorwaerts, "it was the giant in the cradle."

† It is what many people call Marxism. Marxism is and remains a doctrine. Parties can draw neither their name nor their justification from a doctrine. "I am no Marxist" said—guess who? Marx himself.

such was the force and originality of their minds and the extent of their knowledge even if they had never met on their way the *Communist League*. But I am referring to all the "unknown" according to the exclusive and vain jargon of bourgeois literature:—of the shoemaker, Bauer, the tailors, Lessner and Eccarius, the miniature painter, Pfaender, the watchmaker, Moll,* of Lochner, etc., and many others who were the first conscious initiators of our movement. The motto, "Workingmen of all countries, unite," remains as their monument. The passage of socialism from utopia to science marks the result of their work. The survival of their instinct and of their first impulse in the work of to-day is the ineffaceable title which these precursors have acquired to the gratitude of all socialists.

As an Italian, I return so much the more willingly to these beginnings of modern socialism because for me, at least, this recent warning of Engels' is not without importance. "Thus the discovery that everywhere and always political conditions and events find their explanation in economic conditions would not have been made by Marx in 1845, but rather by Loria in 1886. He has at least succeeded in impressing this belief upon his compatriots, and since his book has appeared in French even upon some Frenchmen and he may now go on inflated with

* It is he who established the first relations between Marx and the League and who served as intermediary in the publication of the Manifesto. He fell in the insurrection of 1849 at Murg.

pride and vanity as if he had discovered an epoch-making historic theory until the Italian socialists have time to despoil the illustrious Mr. Loria of the peacock feathers which he has stolen.*

I would willingly close here, but more remains to be said.

On all sides and from all camps protests arise and objections are urged against historical materialism. And some times these voices are swelled here and there by newly converted socialists, socialists who are philosophical, socialists who are sentimental and sometimes hysterical. Then reappears, as a warning, the "question of the belly." Others devote themselves to exercise of logical gymnastics with abstract categories of egoism and altruism; for others again the inevitable struggle for existence always turns up at the right moment.

Morality! But it is high time that we understand the lesson of this morality of the bourgeois epoch in the fable of the bees by Mandeville, who was contemporary with the first projection of classic economics.

And has not the politics of this morality been ex-

* Marx's Capital, Vol. III., Hamburg, 1894, pp. xix-xx. The date of 1845 refers principally to the book "Die heilige Familie, Frankfort, 1845," which was produced in collaboration by Marx and Engels. This book is indispensable to an understanding of the theoretical origin of historical materialism.

plained in classic phrases that can never be forgotten by the first great political writer of the capitalist epoch Machiavelli, who did not invent Machiavellism, but who was its secretary and faithful and diligent editor. And as for the logical tourney between egoism and altruism, has it not been in full view from the time of the Reverend Malthus up to that empty, prolix and tiresome reasoner, the indispensable Spencer? Struggle for existence! But could you wish to observe, study and understand a struggle more important for us than the one which has its birth and is taking on gigantic proportions in the proletarian agitation? Perhaps you would reduce the explanation of this struggle which is developing and working in the supernatural domain of society, which man himself has created in the course of history, through his labor, through improved processes and through social institutions, and which man himself can change through other forms of labor, processes and institutions,—you would perhaps reduce it to the simple explanation of the more general struggle in which plant and animals, and men themselves in so far as they are animals, are contending in the bosom of nature.

But let us return to our subject.

Critical communism has never refused, and it does not refuse, to welcome the multiple and valuable suggestions, ideological, ethical, psychologic and pedagogic which may come from the knowledge and from the study of all forms of communism from

Phales of Chalcedon down to Cabet.* More than this, it is by the study and the knowledge of these forms that the consciousness of the separateness of scientific socialism from all the rest becomes developed and fixed. And in making this study who is there who will refuse to recognize that Thomas More was a heroic soul and a great writer on socialism? Who will not find in his heart a large tribute of admiration for Robert Owen who first gave to the ethics of communism this indisputable principle, that the character and the morals of men are the necessary result of the conditions in which they live and of the circumstances which surround them? And the partisans of critical communism believe it is their duty, traversing history in thought, to claim fellowship with all the oppressed, whatever may have been their destiny, which was that of remaining oppressed and of opening the way after an ephemeral success for the rule of new oppressors.

But the partisans of critical communism differentiate themselves clearly on one point from all other forms or manners of communism, or of socialism, ancient, modern or contemporaneous, and this point is of capital importance.

They cannot admit that the ideologies of the past have remained without effect and that the past attempts of the proletariat have been always overcome by pure chance, by pure accident, by the effect

* I stop with Cabet who lived at the epoch of the Manifesto. I do not think I ought to go as far as the sporadic forms of Bellamy and Hertzka.

of a caprice of circumstances. All these ideologies although they reflected in fact the sentiment directly due to social antitheses, that is to say, the real class struggles, with a lofty sense of justice and a profound devotion to an ideal, nevertheless all reveal ignorance of the true causes and of the effective nature of the antitheses against which they hurled themselves by an act of revolt spontaneous and often heroic. Thence their utopian character. We can moreover explain why the oppressive conditions of other epochs although they were more barbarous and cruel did not bring that accumulation of energy, that concentration of force, or that continuity of resistance which is seen to be realizing itself and developing in the proletariat of our time. It is the change of society in its economic structure; it is the formation of the proletariat in the bosom of the great industry and of the modern state. It is the appearance of the proletariat upon the political scene,—it is the new things, in fine, which have engendered the need of new ideas. Thus critical communism is neither moralizer, nor preacher, nor herald, nor utopian—it already holds the thing itself in its hands and into the thing itself it has put its ethics and its idealism.

This orientation which seems harsh to the sentimentalists because it is too true, too realistic and too real, permits us to retrace the history of the proletariat and of the other oppressed classes which preceded it. We see their different phases; we take account of the failures of Chartism, of the Conspiracy

of Equals and we explore still further back to attempts at relief, to acts of resistance, and to wars,—to the famous peasants' war in Germany, to the Jacquerie and to Father Dolcino. In all these facts and in all these events we discover forms and phenomena relating to the future of the bourgeoisie in proportion as it tears to pieces, overthrows, triumphs over and issues from the feudal system. We can do the same with the class struggles of the ancient world but with less clearness. This history of the proletariat and of the other oppressed classes, of the vicissitudes of their struggles and their revolts, is already a sufficient guide to assist us in understanding why the ideologies of the communism of other epochs were premature.

If the bourgeoisie has not yet arrived everywhere at the final stage of its evolution, it surely has arrived in certain countries at its accomplishment. In fact, in the most advanced countries it is subjecting the various older forms of production, either directly or indirectly, to the action and to the law of capital. And thus it simplifies, or it tends to simplify, the different class struggles of former times, which then obscured each other by their multiplicity, into this single struggle between capital which is converting into merchandise all the products of human labor indispensable to life and the mass of proletarians which sells its labor power,—now also become simple merchandise. The secret of history is simplified. It is all prosaic. And just as the present class struggle is the simplification of all other, so likewise, the

communism of the Manifesto simplifies into rigid and general theoretical formulas the ideologic, ethic, psychologic and pedagogic suggestion of the other forms of communism not by denying but by exalting them. All is prosaic and communism itself partakes of this character, it is now a science.

Thus there are in the Manifesto neither rhetoric nor protestations. It does not lament over pauperism to eliminate it. It sheds tears over nothing. The tears are transformed of themselves into a spontaneous revolutionary force. Ethics and idealism consist henceforth in this, to put the thought of science at the service of the proletariat. If this ethics does not appear moral enough for the sentimentalists, usually hysterical and silly, let them go and borrow altruism from its high priest Spencer who will give a vague and insipid definition of it, such as will satisfy them.

But, again, should the economic factor serve alone to explain the whole of history!

Historic factors! But that is an expression of empiricists or ideologists who repeat Herder. Society is a complex whole or an organism according to the expression of some who waste their time in discussions over the value and the analogical use of this expression. This *complexus* has formed itself and has changed several times. What is the explanation of this change?

Even long before Feuerbach gave a final blow to the theological explanation of history (man makes

religion and not religion man) the old Balzac* had made a satire of it by making men the puppets of God. And had not Vico already recognized that Providence does not act in history from without? And this same Vico, a century before Morgan, had he not reduced history to a process which man himself makes through successive experimentation consisting in the invention of language, religion, customs and laws? Had not Lessing affirmed that history is an education of the human race? Had not Rousseau seen that ideas are born from needs? Had not Saint Simon guessed when he did not lose himself in the distinction between organic and inorganic epochs the real genesis of the Third Estate, and did not his ideas translated into prose make of Augustin Thierry a reconstructor of historical reseach? In the first fifty years of this century and notably in the period from 1830 to 1850 the class struggles which the ancient historians and those of Italy during the Renaissance had described so clearly, instructed by the experience of these struggles in the narrow domain of their own urban republic had grown and had reached on both sides of the Channel greater proportions and an evidence always more palpable. Born in the midst of the great industry, illuminated by the recollection and by the study of the French Revolution they have become intuitively instructive because they found with more or less clearness and consciousness their actual and suggested expression in the programmes of the politi-

* The Balzac of the 17th century.

cal parties: free exchange or tariffs on grain in England, and so on. The conception of history changed to the observer in France, on the right wing as on the left wing of the literary parties, from Guizot to Louis Blanc and to the modest Cabet. Sociology was the need of the time and if it sought in vain its theoretic expression in Auguste Comte, a belated scholastic, it found its artist in Balzac who was the actual inventor of class psychology. To put into the classes and into their frictions the real subject of history and the movement of this in their movement,—this is what was then on the point of being studied and discovered, and it was necessary to fix a theory of this in precise terms.

Man has made his history not by a metaphorical evolution nor with a view of walking on a line of preconceived progress. He has made it by creating his own conditions, that is to say, by creating through his labor an artificial environment, by developing successively his technical aptitudes and by accumulating and transforming the products of his activity in this new environment. We have but one single history and we cannot compare real history, which is actually made, with another which is simply possible. Where shall we find the laws of this formation and of this development? The very ancient formations are not evident at first sight. But bourgeois society because it is born recently and has not yet reached its full development, even in all parts of Europe, bears within itself the embryonic traces of its origin and its *processus,* and it puts

them in full evidence in countries where it is in process of birth before our eyes, as for example, in Japan. In so far as it is society which transforms all the products of human labor into commodities by means of capital, society which assumes the proletariat or creates it and which bears within itself the anxiety, the trouble and the uncertainty of continuous innovations, it is born in determined times according to clear methods which can be indicated although they may be varied. In fact in different countries it has different modes of development. In Italy, for example, it begins before all the others and then stops. In England it is the product of three centuries of economic expropriation of the old forms of production, or of the old proprietorship, to speak the language of the jurists. In one country it elaborates itself little by little combining itself with preexisting forces, as was the case in Germany, and it undergoes their influences through adaptation; in another country it breaks its envelope and crushes out resistance violently, as happened in France, where the great revolution gives us the most intense and the most bewildering example of historic action that is known, and thus forms the greatest school of sociology.

As I have already indicated this formation of modern or bourgeois history has been summed up in rapid and masterly strokes in the Manifesto, which has given its general anatomical profile with its successive aspects, the trade guild, commerce, manufacture and the great industry and has also indicated

some of the organs and appliances of a derived and complex character, law, political forms, etc. The elements of the theory which was to explain history by the principle of the class struggle were already implicitly contained in it.

This same bourgeois society which revolutionized the earlier forms of production had thrown light upon itself and its *processus* in creating the doctrine of its structure, economics. In fact it has not developed in the unconsciousness which characterized primitive societies but in the full light of the modern world beginning with the Renaissance.

Economics, as is known, was born by fragments, and its origin was associated with that of the first bourgeoisie, which was that of commerce and the great geographical discoveries, that is to say, it was contemporary with the first and second phases of mercantilism. And it was born to answer special questions: for example, is interest legitimate? Is it advantageous for states and for nations to accumulate money? It continued to grow, it occupied itself with the most complex sides of the problem of wealth: it developed in the passage from mercantilism to manufacture and then more rapidly and more resolutely in the passage from the latter to the great industry. It was the intellectual soul of the bourgeoisie which was conquering society. It had already as discipline almost defined its general lines on the eve of the French Revolution; it was the sign of the rebellion against the old forms of feudalism, the

guild, privilege, limitations of labor, that is to say it was the sign of liberty. The theory of "natural right" which developed from the precursors of Grotius to Rousseau, Kant, and the Constitution of 93, was nothing else than a duplicate and the ideological complement of economics, to the extent that often the thing and its complement are confounded in one in the mind and in the postulates of writers; of this we have a typical example in the Physiocrats.

In so far as it was a doctrine it separated, distinguished and analyzed the elements and the forms of the *processus* of production, of circulation and of distribution and reduced them all into categories: money, money capital, interest, profit, land rent, wages, etc. It marched, sure of itself, accumulating its analyses from Petty to Ricardo. The sole mistress of the field, it met only rare objections. It started from two hypotheses which it did not take the trouble to justify since they appeared so evident; namely, that the social order which it illustrated was the natural order, and that private property in the means of production was one and the same thing with human liberty; all of which made wage labor and the inferiority of the wage laborers into necessary conditions. In other terms, it did not recognize the historic character of the forms which it studied. The antitheses which it met on its way in its attempt at systematization, after several vain attempts it tried to eliminate logically as was the case with Ricardo in his struggle against the income from land rents.

The beginning of the nineteenth century is marked by violent crises and by those first labor movements which have their immediate origin in the distress attending lockouts. The ideal of the "natural order" is overthrown. Wealth has engendered poverty. The great industry in changing all social relations has increased vices, maladies and subjection. It has, in a word, caused degeneration. Progress has engendered retrogression. What must be done that progress may engender nothing else but progress, that is to say, prosperity, health, security, education and intellectual development equal for all? With this question Owen is wholly concerned and he shares with Fourier and Saint Simon this characteristic that he no longer appeals to self-sacrifice and to religion, and that he wishes to resolve and surmount the social antitheses without diminishing the technical and industrial energy of man, but rather to increase this. It is by this road that Owen became a communist and he is the first who became so in the environment created by modern industry. The antithesis rests entirely on the contradiction between the mode of production and the mode of distribution. This antithesis must, then, be suppressed in a society which produces collectively. Owen becomes utopian. This perfect society must needs be realized experimentally and to this he devotes himself with a heroic constancy and unequalled self-sacrifice bringing a mathematical precision even into his thoughts of its details.

The antithesis between production and distribu-

tion once discovered, there arose in England from Thompson to Bray a series of writers of a socialism which is not strictly utopian, but which should be qualified as one-sided for its object is to correct the manifest vices of society by as many appropriate remedies.*

In fact the first stage of all those who are on the road toward socialism is the discovery of the contradiction between production and distribution. Then, these ingenuous questions immediately arise: Why not abolish poverty? Why not eliminate lockouts? Why not suppress the middle man? Why not favor the direct exchange of products in consideration of the labor that they contain? Why not give the worker the entire product of his labor, etc. These demands reduce the *things,* tenacious and resistant, of real life, into as many reasonings, and they have for their object to combat the capitalist system as if it were a machine from which one can take away or to which one can add pieces, wheels and gearings.

The partisans of critical communism have broken definitely with all these tendencies. They have been the successors and the continuers of classical economics.† What is the doctrine of the structure of present society? No one can combat this structure

* It is these writers whom Menger thought he had discovered as the authors of scientific socialism.

† It is for this reason that certain critics, Wieser for example, propose to abandon Ricardo's theory of value because it leads to socialism.

in practice, in politics or in revolution without first taking an exact account of its elements and its relations and making a fundamental study of the doctrine which explains it. These forms, these elements and these relations arise in certain historic conditions but they constitute a system and a necessity. How can it be hoped to destroy such a system by an act of logical negation and how eliminate it by reasoning? Eliminate pauperism? But it is a necessary condition of capitalism. Give the worker the entire product of his labor? But what would become of the profit of capital, and where and how could the money expended in the purchase of commodities be increased if among all the commodities which it meets and with which it makes exchanges there were not a particular one which returns to the buyer more than it costs him; and is not this commodity precisely the labor power of the wage worker? The economic system is not a tissue of reasonings but it is a sum and a complexus of facts which engenders a complex tissue of relations. It is a foolish thing to assume that this system of facts which the ruling class has established with great pains through the centuries by violence, by sagacity, by talent and by science will confess itself vanquished, will destroy itself to give way to the demands of the poor and to the reasonings of their advocates. How demand the suppression of poverty without demanding the overthrow of all the rest? To demand of this society that it shall change its law which constitutes its defense is to demand an

absurd thing. To demand of this State that it shall cease to be the buckler and the defense of this society and of this law is plunging into absurdities.* The one-sided socialism which without being clearly utopian starts from the hypothesis that society admits of certain errata without revolution, that is to say without a fundamental change in the general elementary structure of society itself, is a mere piece of ingenuity. This contradiction with the rigid laws of the process of things is shown in all its evidence in Proudhon, who, reproducing without knowing it, or copying directly, some of the one-sided English socialists, wished to arrest and change history, armed with a definition and a syllogism.

The partisans of critical communism recognized that history has the right to follow its course. The bourgeois phase can be outgrown and it will be. But as long as it exists it has its laws. The relativity of these consists in the fact that they grow and develop in certain determined conditions, but their relativity is not simply the opposite of necessity, a mere appearance, a soap-bubble. These laws may disappear and they will disappear by the very fact of the change of society, but they do not yield

* Thus there arises notably in France the illusion of a social monarchy which, succeeding the liberal epoch, should solve harmoniously what is called the social question. This absurdity reproduces itself in infinite varieties of socialism of the pulpit and State socialism. To the different forms of ideological and religious uptopianism is joined a new form of bureaucratic and fiscal utopianism, the Utopia of the idiots.

to the arbitrary suggestion which demands a change, proclaims a reform, or formulates a programme. Communism makes common cause with the proletariat because in this resides the revolutionary force which, bursts, breaks, shakes and dissolves the present social form and creates in it, little by little, new conditions; or to be more exact, the very fact of its movement shows to us that these new conditions are already born.

The theory of the class struggle was found. It was seen to appear both in the origins of the bourgeoisie (whose intrinsic *processus* was already illustrated by the science of economics), and in this new appearance of the proletariat. The relativity of economic laws was discovered, but at the same time their relative necessity was understood. Herein lies the whole method and justification of the new materialistic conception of history. Those deceive themselves who, calling it the economic interpretation of history, think they understand it completely. That designation is better suited, and is only suited, to certain analytic attempts,* which, taking separately and in a distinct fashion on the one side the economic forms and categories, and on the other, for example, law, legislation, politics, customs,—proceed to study the reciprocal influences of the different sides of life considered in an abstract fashion. Quite different is our position. Ours is the organic conception of history. The totality of the unity of

* For example in the essays of Th. Rogers.

social life is the subject matter present to our minds. It is economics itself which dissolves in the course of one process, to reappear in as many morphological stages, in each of which it serves as a substructure for all the rest. Finally, it is not our method to extend the so-called economic factor isolated in an abstract fashion over all the rest, as our adversaries imagine, but it is, before everything else, to form an historic conception of economics and to explain the other changes by means of its changes. Therein lies our answer to all the criticisms which come to us from all the domains of learned ignorance, not excepting the socialists who are insufficiently grounded and who are sentimental or hysterical. And we explain our position thus as Marx has done in his Capital, not the first book of critical communism, but the last great book of bourgeois economics.

At the moment when the Manifesto was written the historic horizon did not go beyond the classic world, the scarcely studied German antiquities and the Biblical tradition which had only lately been reduced to the prosaic conditions of all profane history Our historic horizon is now quite another thing, since it extends to the Aryan antiquities and to the ancient deposits of Egypt and Mesopotamia which precede all the Semitic traditions. And it extends still further back into prehistory, that is to say, into unwritten history. Morgan has given us a knowledge of ancient society, that is to say a pre-political society, and the key to understand

how from it came all the later forms marked by monogamy, the development of the paternal family, the appearance of property, first of the *gens*, then of the family, lastly individual, and by the successive establishment of the alliances between *gentes* which are the origin of the State. All this is illustrated by the knowledge of the process of technique in the discovery and in the use of the means and instruments of labor and by the understanding of the effect of this process upon the social complexus, urging it in certain directions and making it traverse certain stages. These discoveries may still be corrected at certain points, notably by the study of the different specific fashions according to which in different parts of the world the passage from barbarism to civilization has been effected. But, henceforth, one fact is indisputable, namely, that we have before our eyes the general embryogenic record of human development from primitive communism to those complex formations as at Athens or at Rome with their constitutions of citizens arranged in classes according to census which not long ago constituted the columns of Hercules for research into written tradition. The classes which the Manifesto assumed have been later resolved into their process of formation and in this can already be recognized the plexus of reasons and of different economic causes for the categories of the economic science of our bourgeois epoch. The dream of Fourier to find a place for an epoch of civilization in the series of a long and vast process has been realized. A sci-

entific solution has been found for the problem of the origin of inequality among men which Rousseau had tried to solve by arguments of an original dialectic, relying however upon too few real data.

At two points, the extreme points for us, the human process is palpable. One of these is the origin of the bourgeoisie, so recent and in the full light of the science of economics; the other is the ancient formation of the society divided into classes, which marks the passage from higher barbarism to civilization (the epoch of the State) to use expressions employed by Morgan. All that is found between these two epochs is what has, up to this time, formed the subject matter of the chroniclers, the historians properly so-called, the jurists, the theologians and the philosophers. To traverse and reanimate all this domain with the new historic conception is not an easy thing. We must not be over-hasty in tabulating it. At the very beginning we must understand the economics relative to each epoch,* in order to explain specifically the classes which develop in it, avoiding hypothetical and uncertain data and taking care not to carry over our own conditions into each epoch. For that, skilled fingers are needed. Thus, for example, what the Manifesto says of the first origin of the bourgeoisie proceeding from the serfs of the Middle Ages incorporated little by little into the cities is not a general truth. This mode of

* Who would have thought a few years ago of the discovery and the authentic interpretation of an ancient Babylonian law?

origin is peculiar to Germany and to the other countries which reproduce its process. It is not the case either in Italy, nor in Southern France, nor in Spain, which were the fields upon which began the first history of the bourgeoisie, that is to say, of modern civilization. In this first phase are found all the premises of the whole capitalist society as Marx informed us in a note to the first volume of Capital.* This first phase which reaches its perfect form in the Italian municipalities forms the pre-historic background for that capitalist accumulation which Marx has explained with so many characteristic details in the evolution of England. But I will stop there.

The proletarians can have in view nothing but the future. That with which all scientific socialists are primarily concerned is the present in which are spontaneously developed and in which are ripening the conditions of the future. The knowledge of the past is practically of use and of interest only in so far as it throws light upon and explains the present. For the moment it is enough to say that the partisans of critical communism fifty years ago conceived the elements of the new and definite philosophy of history. Soon this fashion of seeing will impose itself because it will be impossible to think the contrary; and this discovery will have the fate of Columbus' egg. And perhaps before an army of scientists has made an application of this conception to

* Note 189, p. 740, of the 3rd German edition.

the continuous narration of the whole history, the success of the proletariat will have become such that the bourgeois epoch will appear to all as something that must be left behind because it will nearly be so in reality. *To understand is to leave behind* (Hegel).

When, fifty years ago, the Manifesto made of the proletarians, of the unfortunates who excited pity, the predestined grave-diggers of the bourgeoisie, the circumference of this burial place must have appeared very small to the imagination of the writers who scarcely concealed in the gravity of their style the idealism of their intellectual passion. The probable circumference in their imagination then embraced only France and England, and it would scarcely have touched the frontiers of other countries, for instance, Germany, To-day the circumference appears to us immense by reason of the rapid and colossal extension of the bourgeois form of production which by inevitable reaction enlarges, makes universal and multiplies the movement of the proletariat and immensely expands the scene upon which is projected the picture of the coming communism. The burial place extends as far as the eye can reach. The more productive forces this magician calls forth, the more he excites and prepares forces that must rebel against himself.

All those who were communists ideological, religious and utopian, or even prophetic and apocalyptic in the past have always believed that the reign

of justice, equality and happiness was destined to have the world for its theatre. To-day the world is invaded by civilization and everywhere is developing that society which lives upon class antagonisms and class domination, the form of bourgeois production (Japan may serve us for an example.) The co-existence of the two nations in one and the same state, which the divine Plato had already described, is perpetuated. The earth will not be won over to communism to-morrow. But as the confines of the bourgeois world enlarge, more numerous are those who enter into it, abandoning and leaving behind the lower forms of production,—and thus the attempt of communism gains in firmness and precision; especially because in the domain and struggle of competition, the deviations due to conquest and colonization are diminishing. The proletarian International, while embryonic in the Communist League of fifty years ago, henceforth becomes Interoceanic and it affirms on the first of every May that the proletarians of the whole world are really and actively united. The future grave-diggers of the bourgeoisie and their descendants to many generations will ever remember the date of the Communist Manifesto.

PART II

HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

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I.

This class of studies, like many others, but this more than any other, is confronted with a great difficulty, indeed an irksome hindrance, in that vice of minds educated by literary methods alone which is ordinarily called *verbalism*. This bad habit creeps into and spreads itself through all domains of knowledge; but in studies which relate to the so-called moral world, that is to say, to the historico-social *complexus*, it very often happens that the cult and the dominion of words succeed in corrupting and blotting out the real and living sense of things.

In the field where a long observation, repeated experiences, the certain use of improved instruments, the general or partial application of the calculus have resulted in putting the mind into a constant and methodical relation with things and their variations, as in the natural sciences properly so-called,—there the myth and superstition of words are left behind and vanquished; there the questions of terminology no longer have more than the secondary value of pure convention. In the study of human relations and actions, on the contrary, the passions, the interests, the prejudices of school, sect, class and

religion, the literary abuse of the traditional means of representing thought, and scholasticism, ever vanquished and always reborn, conceal the actual things, or transform them involuntarily into terms, into words, into abstract and conventional fashions of speech.

We must, first of all, take account of this difficulty when we use the expression or the formula "materialistic conception of history." Many have imagined, do imagine, and will imagine that it is possible and convenient to penetrate into the sense of the phrase by the simple analysis of the words which compose it instead of arriving at it from the context of an explanation, from the genetic study of the formation of the doctrine,* or from the polemical writings in which its partisans refute the objections of its opponents. Verbalism tends always to shut itself up in purely formal definitions; it gives rise in the minds to this erroneous belief, that it is an easy thing to reduce into terms and into simple and palpable expressions the agitated and immense *complexus* of nature and history and that it is easy to picture the multiform and complicated interlacings of causes and effects; in clearer terms, it obliterates the meaning of the problems because it sees in them nothing but questions of nomenclature.

If, moreover, it then happens that verbalism finds

* This genetic study forms the subject of my first essay, *In Memory of the Communist Manifesto*, which is the indispensable preamble to an understanding of all the rest.

a support in certain theoretical hypotheses, for example, that *matter* indicates something which is below or opposed to another higher or nobler thing which is called spirit; or if it happens to be at one with that literary habit which opposes the word materialism, understood in a disparaging sense, to all that, in a word, is called idealism, that is to say, to the sum total of the anti-egoistic inclinations and acts; then our embarrassment is extreme! Then we are told that in this doctrine it is attempted to explain the whole of man by the mere calculation of his material interests and that no value whatever is allowed to any ideal interest. The inexperience, the incapacity and the haste of certain partisans and propagandists of this doctrine have also been a cause of these confusions. In their eagerness to explain to others what they themselves only half understand, at a time when the doctrine itself is only in its beginnings and still has need of many developments, they have believed they could apply it, such as it was, to whatever historic fact they were considering, and they have almost reduced it to tatters, exposing it thus to the easy criticism and the ridicule of people on the watch for scientific novelties, and other idle persons of the same type.

Since it has been my privilege in these first pages simply to rebut these prejudices (in a preliminary fashion) and unmask the intentions and the tendencies underlying them, it must be remembered that the meaning of this doctrine ought, before all

else, to be drawn from the position which it takes and occupies with regard to the doctrines against which it is in reality opposed, and particularly with regard to the ideologies of every sort;—that the proof of its value consists exclusively in the more suitable and more appropriate explanation of the succession of human events which is derived from it;—that this doctrine does not imply a subjective preference for a certain quality or a certain sum of human interests opposed by free choice to other interests, but that it merely affirms the objective co-ordination and subordination of all interests in the development of all society; and this it affirms, thanks to that genetic *processus* which consists in going from the conditions to the conditioned, from the elements of formation to the things formed.

Let the verbalists reason as they like over the value of the word *matter* in so far as it implies or recalls a metaphysical conception, or in so far as it is the expression of the last hypothetical substratum of experience. We are not here in the domain of physics, chemistry or biology; we are only searching for the explicit conditions of human association in so far as it is no longer simply animal. It is not for us to support our inductions or our deductions upon the data of biology, but, on the contrary, to recognize before all else the peculiarities of human association, which form and develop through the succession and the growing perfection of the activity of man himself in given and variable conditions, and to

find the relations of co-ordination and subordination of the needs which are the substratum of will and action. It is not proposed to discover an intention nor to formulate a criticism; it is merely the necessity arising from the facts that must be put in evidence.

And as men, not by free choice, but because they could not act otherwise, satisfy first certain elementary needs, which, in their turn, give rise to others in their upward development, and as for the satisfaction of their needs, whatever they may be, they invent and employ certain means and certain tools and associate themselves in certain definite fashions, the materialism of historical interpretation is nothing else than an attempt to reconstruct by thought with method the genesis and the complexity of the social life which develops through the ages. The novelty of this doctrine does not differ from that of all the other doctrines which after many excursions through the domains of the imagination have finally arrived, very painfully, at reaching the prose of reality and halting there.

II.

There is a certain affinity, apparently at least, between that formal vice of verbalism and another defect of the mind, whose origins may, however, be varied. In consideration of some of its most common and popular effects I will call it *phraseology,* al-

though this word is not an exact expression of the thing and does not set forth its origin.

For long centuries men have written on history, have explained it, have illustrated it. The most varied interests, from the interests more immediately practical to the interests purely esthetic, have moved different writers to conceive and to execute this type of composition. These different types have always taken birth in different countries long after the origins of civilization, of the development of the state and of the passage from the primitive communist society to the society which rests upon class differences and class antagonisms. The historians, even if they have been as artless as Herodotus, were always born and formed in a society having nothing ingenuous in it, but very complicated and complex, and at a time when the reasons for this complication and complexity were unknown and their origins forgotten. This complexity, with all the contrasts which it bears within itself and which it reveals later and makes burst forth in its various vicissitudes, stood forth before the narrators as something mysterious and calling for an explanation, and if the historian wished to give some sequence and a certain connection to the things narrated, he was obliged to add certain general views to the simple narration. From the jealousy of the gods of Father Herodotus to the environment of M. Taine, an infinite number of concepts serving as means of explanation and as complements to the things related have been imposed upon the narrators by the natural voices of

their immediate thought. Class tendencies, religious ideas, popular prejudices, influences or imitations of a current philosophy, excursions of imagination and a desire to give an artistic appearance to facts known only in a fragmentary fashion, all these causes and other analogous causes have contributed to form the substratum of the more or less artless theory of events which is implicitly at the bottom of the narration, or which serves at least to flavor and adorn it. Whether men speak of chance or of destiny, whether they appeal to the providential direction of human events, or adhere to the word and concept of chance, the only divinity left in the rigid and often coarse conception of Machiavelli, or whether they speak, as is frequent enough at the present time, of the logic of events, all these conceptions were and are effects and results of ingenuous thought, of immediate thought, of thought which cannot justify to itself its course, and its products, either by the paths of criticism or by the methods of experience. To fill up with conventional causes (e. g., *chance*) or with a statement of theoretical plausibility (e. g., the *inevitable course of events* which sometimes is confused in the mind with the notion of progress) the gaps of our knowledge as to the fashion in which things have been actually produced by their own necessity without care for our free will and our consent, that is the motive and the result of this popular philosophy, latent or explicit, in the chroniclers, which by reason of its su-

perficial character dissolves as soon as scientific criticism appears.

In all these concepts and all these imaginings which in the light of criticism appear as simple provisional devices and effects of an unripe thought, but which often seem to "cultured people" the *non plus ultra* of intelligence,—in all these a great part of the human *processus* is revealed and reflected; and, consequently, we should not consider them as gratuitous inventions nor as products of a momentary illusion. They are a part and a moment in the development of what we call the human mind. If later it is observed that these concepts and these imaginings are mingled and confounded in the accepted opinions of cultured people, or of those who pass for such, they make up an immense mass of prejudices and they constitute an impediment which ignorance opposes to the clear and complete vision of the real things. These prejudices turn up again as etymological derivations in the language of professional politicians, of so-called publicists and journalists of every kind, and offer the support of rhetoric to self-styled public opinion.

To oppose and then to replace this mirage of uncritical conceptions, these idols of the imagination, these effects of literary artifice, this conventionalism by the real subjects, or the forces which are positively acting,—that is to say, men in their various and diversified social relations,—this is the revolu-

tionary enterprise and the scientific aim of the new doctrine which renders objective and I might say naturalizes the explanation of the historical *processus.*

A certain definite nation, that is to say, not a certain mass of individuals, but a *plexus* of men organized in such and such a fashion by natural relations of consanguinity, or following such or such an artificial or customary order of relationship and affinity, or by reason of permanent proximity;—this nation, on a certain circumscribed and limited territory, having such and such fertility, productive in such and such a manner acquired through certain definite forms by continuous labor;—this nation, thus distributed over this territory and thus divided and articulated by the effect of a definite division of labor which is scarcely beginning to give birth to or which has already developed and ripened such and such a division of classes, or which has already disintegrated or transformed a whole series of classes;—this nation which possesses such and such instruments from the flint stone to the electric light and from the bow and arrow to the repeating rifle, which produces according to a certain fashion and shares its products conformably to its way of producing;—this nation, which by all these relations constitutes a society in which either by habits of mutual accommodation or by explicit conventions, or by acts of violence suffered and endured, has already given birth, or is on the point of giving birth

to legal-political relations which result in the formation of the state;—this nation, which by the organization of the state, which is only a means for fixing, defending and perpetuating inequalities, by reason of the antagonisms which it bears within itself, renders continuously unstable the organization itself, whence result the political movements and revolutions, and therefore the reasons for progress and retrogression:—there is the sum of what is at the bottom of all history. And there is the victory of realistic prose over all the fantastic and ideological combinations.

Certainly it requires some resignation to see things as they are, passing beyond the phantoms which for centuries have prevented right vision. But this revelation of realistic doctrine was not and is not designed to be the rebellion of the material man against the ideal man. It has been and is, on the contrary, the discovery of the principles and the motives which are real and which belong to all human development, including all that we call the ideal in positive conditions, determined by facts which carry in themselves the reasons and the law and the rhythm of their own development.

III.

But it would be a complete error to believe that the writers who narrate, explain, or illustrate have themselves invented and given life to this enormous mass of unripe concepts, imaginings, and explana-

tions which, thanks to the force of prejudice, concealed for centuries the real truth. It may happen, and it certainly does happen, that some of these concepts are the fruit and the product of personal views, or of literary currents formed in the narrow professional circle of the universities and academies. The people in this case are absolutely ignorant of them. But the important fact is that history itself has put on these veils; that is to say, that the very actors and workers of the historic events—great masses of people, directing and ordering classes, masters of state, sects or parties, in the narrowest sense of the word, if we make exception for an occasional moment of lucid interval—never had up to the end of the past century a consciousness of their own work, unless it be through some ideological envelope which prevented any sight of the real causes. Already at the distant epoch when barbarism was passing over into civilization, that is to say, when the first discoveries of agriculture, the stable establishment of a population upon a definite territory, the first division of labor in society, the first alliances of different gentes, gave the conditions in which developed property and the state, or at least the city,—even then, at the epoch of all the first social revolutions, men ideally transformed their work, seeing in it the miraculous acts of gods and heroes. So much so that, while acting as they could and as they must, granted the necessity and the fact of their relative economic development, they conceived an explanation of their own work as if it did not belong

to them. This ideological envelope of human works has changed since then more than once in form, in appearance, in combinations and in relations in the course of the centuries, from the immediate production of the ingenuous myths up to the complicated theological systems and to *The City of God* of St. Augustine—from the superstitious credulity in miracles down to the bewildering miracles of the metaphysicians, that is to say, down to the *Idea* which for the *decadents* of Hegelianism engenders of itself, in itself, by its own disaggregation the most incongruous variations of social life in the course of history.

Now, precisely because the visual angle of ideological interpretation has not been finally outgrown until very lately, and because it is only in our days that a sum total of the real and really acting relations has been clearly distinguished from the ingenuous reflections of myth and the more artificial reflections of religion and metaphysics, our doctrine states a new problem and carries within itself grave difficulties for whoever wishes to fit it for providing a specific explanation of the history of the past.

The problem consists in this: that our doctrine necessitates a new criticism of the sources of history. And I do not wish to be understood as speaking exclusively of the criticism of documents in the proper and ordinary sense of the word, because as for this we may content ourselves with what is de-

livered to us ready made by the critics, the scholars, and the professional philologists. But I would speak of that immediate source which is behind the so called documents properly and which, before expressing itself and fixing itself in these, resides in the spirit and in the form of the consciousness in which the actors accounted to themselves for the motives of their own work. This spirit, that is to say, this consciousness, is often inadequate to the causes which we are now in a position to discover, from which it follows that the actors seem to us enveloped, as it were, in a circle of illusions. To strip the historic facts from these envelopes which clothe the very facts while they are developing—this is to make a new criticism of the sources in the realistic sense of the word and not in the formal documentary sense. It is, in short, to make react upon the knowledge of past conditions the consciousness of which we are now capable, and thereby to reconstruct them anew.

But this revision of the most direct sources, if it marks the extreme limit of the historic self-consciousness which may be reached, may be an occasion for falling into a serious error. As we place ourselves at a point of view which is beyond the ideological views to which the actors in history were indebted for a consciousness of their work and in which they often found both the motives and the justification of their action, we may falsely believe that these ideological views were a pure appearance,

a simple artifice, a pure illusion in the vulgar sense of the word. Martin Luther, like the other great reformers, his contemporaries, never knew, as we know to-day, that the Reformation was but an episode in the development of the Third Estate, and an economic revolt of the German nation against the exploitation of the Papal court. He was what he was, as an agitator and a politician, because he was wholly taken up with the belief which made him see in the class movement which gave an impulse to the agitation a return to true Christianity and a divine necessity in the vulgar course of events. The study of remote effects, that is to say, the increasing strength of the bourgeoisie of the cities against the feudal lords, the increase of the territorial dominion of the princes at the expense of the inter-territorial and super-territorial power of the emperor and the pope, the violent repression of the movement of the peasants and the more properly proletarian movement of the Anabaptists permit us now to reconstruct the authentic history of the economic causes of the Reformation, particularly in the final proportions which it took, which is the best of proofs. But that does not mean that we are privileged to detach the fact arrived at from the mode of its realization and to analyze the circumstantial integrality by a posthumous analysis altogether subjective and simplified. The inner causes, or, as would be said now, the profane and prosaic motives of the Reformation, appear to us clearly in France, where it was not victorious; clearly again in the

Low Countries, where, apart from the differences of nationality, the contrasts of economic interests are shown strikingly in the struggle against Spain; very clearly again in England, where the religious renovation realized, thanks to political violence, placed in full light the passage to those conditions which are for our modern bourgeoisie the forerunners of capitalism. *Post factum,* and after the tardy realization of unforeseen consequences, the history of the real movements which were the inner causes of the Reformation, in great part unknown to the actors themselves, will appear in full light. But that the fact came about precisely as it did come about, that it took on certain determined forms, that it clothed itself in certain vestments, that it painted itself in certain colors, that it put in movement certain passions, that it displayed a special degree of fanaticism,—in these consist its specific character, which no analytic ability can make otherwise than as it was. Only the love of paradox inseparable from the zeal of the passionate popularizers of a new doctrine can have brought some to believe that to write history it was sufficient to put on record merely the *economic moment* (often still unknown and often unknowable), and thereupon to cast to the earth all the rest as a useless burden with which men had capriciously loaded themselves, as a superfluity, a mere trifle, or even, as it were, something not existent.

From the fact that history must be taken in its

entirety and that in it the kernel and the husk are but one, as Goethe said of all things, three consequences follow:—

First, it is evident that in the domain of historico-social determinism, the linking of causes to effects, of conditions to the things conditioned, of antecedents to consequents, is never evident at first sight in the subjective determinism of individual psychology. In this last domain it was a relatively easy thing for abstract and formal philosophy to discover, passing above all the baubles of fatalism and free will, the evidence of the motive in every volition, because, in fine, there is no wish without its determining motive. But beneath the motives and the wish there is the genesis of both, and to reconstruct this genesis we must leave the closed field of consciousness to arrive at the analysis of the simple necessities, which, on the one side, are derived from social conditions, and on the other side are lost in the obscure background of organic dispositions, in ancestry and in atavism. It is not otherwise with historical determinism, where, in the same way, we begin with motives religious, political, æsthetic, passionate, etc., but where we must subsequently discover the causes of these motives in the material conditions underlying them. Now the study of these conditions should be so specified that we may perceive indubitably not only what are the causes, but again by what mediations they arrive at that form which reveals them to the con-

sciousness as motives whose origin is often obliterated.

And thence follows indubitably this second consequence that in our doctrine we have not to re-translate into economic categories all the complex manifestations of history, but only to explain in the *last analysis* (Engels) all the historic facts *by means of the underlying economic structure* (Marx), which necessitates analysis and reduction and then interlinking and construction.

It results from this, in the third place, that, passing from the underlying economic structure to the picturesque whole of a given history, we need the aid of that complexus of notions and knowledge which may be called, for lack of a better term, social psychology. I do not mean by that to allude to the fantastic existence of a social psyche nor to the concept of an assumed collective spirit which by its own laws, independent of the consciousness of individuals and of their material and definable relations, realizes itself and shows itself in social life. That is pure mysticism. Neither do I wish to allude to those attempts at generalization which fill up treatises on social psychology and the general idea of which is to transport and apply to a subject which is called social consciousness the known categories and forms of individual psychology. Nor again do I wish to allude to that mass of semi-organic and semi-psychological denominations by the aid of which some attribute to the social being, as Schäffle does, a brain, a spinal column, sensibility, sentiment,

conscience, will, etc. But I wish to speak of more modest and more prosaic things, that is to say, of those concrete and precise states of mind which make us know as they really were the plebeians of Rome at a certain spoch, the artisans of Florence at the moment when the movement of the Ciompi burst forth, or those peasants of France within whom was engendered, to follow Taine's expression, the "spontaneous anarchy" of 1789, those peasants who finally became free laborers and small proprietors, or, aspiring to property, transformed themselves rapidly from victors over the foreigner into automatic instruments of reaction. This social psychology, which no one can reduce to abstract canons because, in most cases, it is merely descriptive, this is what the chroniclers, the orators, the artists, the romancers and the ideologists of every sort have seen and up to now have conceived as the exclusive object of their studies. In this psychology, which is the specific consciousness of men in given social conditions, the agitators, orators and propagandists trust today, and to it they appeal. We know that it is the fruit, the outcome, the effect of certain social conditions actually determined;—this class, in this situation, determined by the functions which it fulfills, by the subjection in which it is held, by the dominion which it exercises;—and finally, these classes, these functions, this subjection and this dominion involve such and such a determined form of production and distribution of the immediate means of life, that is to say, a determined economic struc-

ture. This social psychology, by its nature always circumstantial, is not the expression of the abstract and generic process of the self-styled human intellect. It is always a specified formation from specified conditions. We hold this principle to be indisputable, that it is not the forms of consciousness which determine the human being, but it is the manner of being which determines the consciousness (Marx).

But these forms of consciousness, even as they are determined by the conditions of life, constitute in themselves also a part of history. This does not consist only in the economic anatomy, but in all that combination which clothes and covers that anatomy even up to the multicolored reflections of the imagination. In other words, there is no fact in history which does not recall by its origin the conditions of the underlying economic structure, but there is no fact in history which is not preceded, accompanied and followed by determined forms of consciousness, whether it be superstitious or experimental, ingenuous or reflective, impulsive or self-controlled, fantastic or reasoning.

IV.

I was saying a moment ago that our doctrine makes history objective and in a certain sense naturalizes it, going from the explanation of the data, evident at first sight, of the personalities acting with design, and of the auxiliary conceptions of the ac-

tion, to the causes and the motives of the will and the action, in order to find thereupon the co-ordination of these causes and of these motives in the pre-elementary *processus* of the production of the immediate means of existence.

Now this term "naturalizing" has led more than one mind into confusing this order of problems with another order of problems, that is to say, into extending to history the laws and the manners of thinking which have already appeared suitable to the study and explanation of the material world in general and of the animal world in particular. And because Darwinism succeeded in carrying, thanks to the principle of the transformation of species, the last citadel of the metaphysical fixity of things, and in discerning, in the organisms, phases, as it were, and moments of a real and proper natural history, it has been imagined that it was a commonplace and simple enterprise to borrow for an explanation of the future and the history of human life the concepts, the principles and the methods of examination to which that animal life is subjected which in consequence of the immediate conditions of the struggle for existence is unfolding to topographical environments not modified by the action of labor. Darwinism, political and social, has, like an epidemic, for many years invaded the mind of more than one thinker, and many more of the advocates and declaimers of sociology, and it has been reflected as a fashionable habit and a phraseological current even in the daily language of the politicians.

It seems at first sight that there is something immediately evident and instinctively plausible in this fashion of reasoning, which it may be said is principally distinguished by its abuse of analogy and by its haste in drawing conclusions. Man is without doubt an animal, and he is linked by connections of descent and affinity to other animals. He has no privileges of origin or of elementary structure, and his organism is merely one particular case of general physiology. His first immediate field was that of simple nature not modified by work, and from thence are derived the imperious and inevitable conditions of the struggle for existence, with the consequent forms of adaptation. Thence are born races in the true and authentic sense of the word; that is to say, in so far as they are immediate determinations of black, white, yellow, woolly-haired, straight-haired, etc., and not secondary historico-social formations, that is to say, peoples and nations. Thence are born the primitive instincts of sociability and in life in promiscuity arise the first rudiments of sexual selection.

But if we can reconstruct in imagination the primitive savage, by combining our conjectures, it is not given us to have an empirical intuition of him, just as it is not given us to determine the genesis of that hiatus, that is to say, that break in continuity, thanks to which human life is found detached from animal life to rise, in the sequel, to an ever higher level. All men who live at this moment on the earth's surface and all those who, having lived in

the past, were the objects of any trustworthy observation, are found, and were found, already sufficiently removed from the moment when purely animal life had ceased. A certain social life with customs and institutions, even if it be of the most elementary form that we know, that is to say, of the Australian tribes, divided into classes and practising the marriage of all the men of one class with all the women of another class, separates human life by a great interval from animal life. If we consider the *maternal gens,* of which the classic type, the Iroquois type, has, thanks to Morgan's work, revolutionized prehistoric science, while giving us at the same time the key to the origins of history properly so called, we have a form of society already much advanced by the complexity of its relations. At that stage of social life which, according to our knowledge, seems very elementary, that is to say, in the Australian society, not only does a very complicated language differentiate men from all other animals (and language is a condition and an instrument, a cause and an effect of sociability), but the specialization of human life, apart from the discovery of fire, is manifested by the use of many other artificial means by which the needs of life are satisfied. A certain territory acquired for the common use of a tribe, a certain art of hunting—the use of certain instruments of defense and attack and the possession of certain utensils for preserving the things acquired—and then the ornamentation of the body, etc., all this means that at bottom this life

rests upon an artificial, although very elementary, basis, upon which men endeavor to fix themselves and adapt themselves,—upon a basis which is after all the condition of all further progress. According as this artificial basis is more or less formed, the men who have produced it and who live in it are considered more or less savage or barbarous. This first formation constitutes what we may call pre-history.

History, according to the literary use of the word, namely, that part of the human *processus* whose traditions are fixed in the memory, begins at a moment when the artificial basis has been formed for a considerable length of time. For example, the canalization of Mesopotamia gives us the ancient pre-Semitic Babylonian state, while the extremly ancient Egyptian civilization rests upon the application of the Nile to agriculture. Upon this artificial basis, which appears in the extreme horizon of known history, lived, as now, not shapeless masses of individuals, but organized groups whose organization was fixed by a certain distribution of tasks, that is to say, of labor and by consecutive methods of co-ordination and subordination. These relations, these connections, these ways of living were not and are not the result of the crystallization of customs under the immediate action of the animal struggle for existence. What is more, they presuppose the discovery of certain instruments, and, for example, the domestication of certain animals, the working of minerals and even of iron,

the introduction of slavery, etc., instruments and methods of economy which have first differentiated communities from each other and have subsequently differentiated the component parts of these communities themselves. In other words, the works of men in so far as they live together react upon the men themselves. Their discoveries, and their inventions, by creating artificial ways of living, have produced not only habits and customs (clothing, cooking of food, etc.), but relations and bonds of coexistence proportioned and adapted to the mode of production and reproduction of the means of immediate life.

At the dawn of traditional history economics is already operating. Men are working to live, on a foundation which has been in great part modified by their work and with tools which are completely their work. And from that moment they have struggled among themselves to conquer each from the other a superior position in the use of these artificial means; that is to say, they have struggled among themselves whether as serfs and masters, subjects and lords, conquered and conquerors, exploited and exploiters, both where they have progressed and where they have retrograded and where they have halted in a form which they have not been capable of outgrowing, but never have they returned to the animal life by the complete loss of their artificial foundation.

Historical science has, then, as its first and prin-

cipal object the determination and the investigation of this artificial foundation, its origin, its composition, its changes and its transformations. To say that all this is only a part and a prolongation of nature, is to say a thing which by its too abstract and too generic character has no longer any meaning.

The human race, in fact, lives only in earthly conditions, and we cannot suppose it to be transplanted elsewhere. Under these conditions it has found from its very first beginnings down to the present day the immediate means necessary for the development of labor, that is to say, for its material progress as for its inner formation. These natural conditions were and they are always indispensable to the sporadic agriculture of the nomads, who sometimes cultivated the earth merely for the pasturage of animals, as well as for the refined products of intensive modern horticulture. These earthly conditions, precisely as they have furnished the different sorts of stones suited for the fabrication of the first weapons, furnish now also, with coal, the elements of the great industry; precisely as they gave the first laborers osiers and willows to plait, they give now all the materials necessary to the complicated technique of electricity.

It is not, however, the natural materials themselves which have progressed. On the contrary, it is only men who progress, through discovering little by little in nature the conditions which permit them to produce in more and more complex forms, thanks to the labor accumulated in experience. This

progress does not consist merely in the sort of progress with which subjective psychology is concerned, that is to say, the inner modifications which would be the proper and direct development of the intellect, the reasoning and the thought. Moreover, this inner progress is but a secondary and derived product, in proportion as there is already a progress realized in the artificial foundation which is the sum of the social relations resulting from the forms and the distributions of labor. It is, then, a meaningless affirmation to say that all this is but a simple prolongation of nature, unless one wishes to employ this word in so generic a sense that it no longer indicates anything precise and distinct; that which is not realized by the work of man.

History is the work of man in so far as man can create and improve his instruments of labor, and with these instruments can create an artificial environment whose complicated effects react later upon himself, and which by its present state and its successive modifications is the occasion and the condition of his development. There are, then, no reasons for carrying back that work of man which is history to the simple struggle for existence. If this struggle modifies and improves the organs of animals, and if in given circumstances and methods it produces and develops new organs, it still does not produce that continuous, perfected and traditional movement which is the human *processus*. Our doctrine must not be confounded with Darwinism, and it need not invoke anew the conception of a myth-

ical, mystical or metaphorical form of fatalism. If it is true in effect that history rests, before all else, upon the development of technique, that is to say, if it is true that the successive discovery of tools gives rise to the successive distributions of labor, and therewith to the inequalities whose sum total, more or less stable, forms the social organism, it is equally true that the discovery of these instruments is at once the cause and the effect of these conditions and of those forms of the inner life to which, isolating them by psychological abstraction, we give the name of imagination, intellect, reason, thought, etc. By producing successively the different social environment, that is to say, the successive artificial foundations, man has produced himself, and in this consists the serious kernel, the concrete reason, the positive foundation of that which by various fantastic combinations and by a varied logical architecture has suggested to the ideologists the notion of the progress of the human mind.

Nevertheless, this expression of *naturalizing* history, which, understood in too broad and too generic a sense, may be the occasion of the equivocations of which we have spoken, when it is, on the contrary, employed with proper precaution and in a tentative fashion, sums up briefly the criticism of all the ideological views which, in the interpretation of history, start from this hypothesis, that human work or activity are one and the same with free will, free choice and voluntary designs.

It was easy and convenient for the theologians to carry back the course of human events to a preconceived plan or design, because they passed directly from the facts of experience to an assumed mind which ruled the universe. The jurists, who first had occasion to discover in the institutions which formed the object of their studies a certain guiding thread through the forms which manifestly succeeded each other, carried over, as they still carry over as cheerfully, the reasoning faculty which is their own quality, to serve as an explanation for the whole vast social fabric, however complicated. The men of politics, who naturally take their point of departure in this datum of experience, that the officers of the state, whether by the acquiescence of the subject masses or profiting by the antitheses of interests of the different social groups, may set aims for themselves and realize them voluntarily and in a deliberate fashion,—these men are brought to see in the succession of human events only a variation of these designs, these projects and these intentions. Now our conception, while revolutionizing in their foundations the hypotheses of the theologians, the jurists and the politicians, terminates in this affirmation, that human labor and activity in general are not always one and the same thing in the course of history with the will which acts with design, with preconceived plans and with its free choice of means; that is to say, that they are not one and the same thing with the reasoning faculty. All that has happened in history is the work of man,

but it was not, and is not, with rare exceptions, the result of a critical choice or of a reasoning desire. Moreover, it was and is through necessity that, determined by external needs and occasions, this activity engenders an experience and a development of internal and external organs. Among these organs we must include intelligence and reason which also are the result and consequence of repeated and accumulated experience. The integral formation of man in his historical development is henceforth no longer a hypothetical datum nor a simple conjecture. It is an intuitive and palpable truth. The conditions of the *processus* which engenders a step of progress are henceforth reducible into a series of explanations; and up to a certain point we have under our eyes the schedule of all historical developments, morphologically conceived. This doctrine is the clear and definite negation of all ideology, because it is the explicit negation of every form of rationalism, understanding by this word this concept, that things in their existence and their development answer to a norm, an ideal, a measure, an end, in an implicit or explicit fashion. The whole course of human events is a sum, a succession of series of conditions which men have made and laid down for themselves through the experience accumulated in their changing social life, but it represents neither the tendency to realize a predetermined end nor the deviation of a first principle from perfection and felicity. Progress itself implies merely that empirical and circumstantial notion of a thing which is at

present defined in our mind, because, thanks to the development thus far realized, we are in a position to estimate the past and to foresee, at least in a certain sense and in a certain measure, the future.

V.

In this fashion a serious ambiguity is dissolved and the errors carried with it are removed. Reasonable and well founded is the tendency of those who aim to subordinate the sum total of human events in their course to the rigorous conception of determinism. There is, on the contrary, no reason for confusing this derived, reflex and complex determinism with the determinism of the immediate struggle for existence which is produced and developed on a field not modified by the continued action of labor. Legitimate and well founded, in an absolute fashion, is the historical explanation which proceeds in its course from the volitions which have voluntarily regulated the different phases of life, to the motives and objective causes of every choice, discovered in the conditions of environment, territory, accessible means of existence and conditions of experience. But there is, on the contrary, no foundation for that opinion which tends to the negation of every volition by consequence of a theoretical view which would substitute automatism for voluntarism. There is nothing in it, as a matter of fact, but a pure and simple conceit.

Wherever the means of production have devel-

oped, to a certain point, wherever the artificial foundation has acquired a certain consistency, and wherever the social differentiations and their resulting antitheses have created the need, the possibility and the conditions of an organization more or less stable or unstable, there, always and necessarily, appear premeditated designs, political views, plans of conduct, systems of law and finally maxims and general and abstract principles. In the circle of these products, and of these derived and complex developments of the second degree, spring up also the sciences and arts, philosophy and learning, and history as a literary fashion of production. This circle is what the rationalists and the ideologists, ignorant of its real foundations, have called, and call, in an exclusive fashion, civilization. And, in fact, it has happened, and it happens, that some men, and especially professional scientists, lay or clerical, have found, and find, the means of intellectual livelihood in the closed circle of the reflex and secondary products of civilization, and that they have been able and are able consequently to submit all the rest to the subjective view which they have elaborated under these conditions; that is, the origin and explanation of all the ideologies. Our doctrine has definitely outgrown the visual angle of ideology. The premeditated designs, the political views, sciences, systems of law, etc., instead of being the means and the instrument of the explanation of history, are precisely what require to be explained, because they are derived from determined conditions and situa-

tions. But that does not mean that they are pure appearances, soap bubbles. If they are things which have been developed and derived, that does not imply that they are not real things; and that is so true that they have been, for centuries, to the unscientific consciousness, and to the scientific consciousness still on the way towards its formation, the only ones which really existed.

But that is not all.

Our doctrine, like others, may lead to reverie and offer an occasion and a theme for a new inverted ideology. It was born on the battlefield of communism. It assumes the appearance of the modern proletariat on the political stage, and it assumes that alignment upon the origins of our present society which has permitted us to reconstruct in a critical manner the whole genesis of the bourgeoisie. It is a doctrine revolutionary from two points of view; because it has found the reasons and the methods of development of the proletarian revolution which is in the making, and because it proposes to find the causes and the conditions of development of all other social revolutions which have taken place in the past, in the class antagonisms which arrived at a certain critical point, by reason of the contradiction between the forms of production and the development of the producing forces. And this is not all. In the light of this doctrine what is essential in history is summed up in these critical moments, and it abandons, momentarily at least, what

unites these different moments to the learned ministrations of the professional narrators. As a revolutionary doctrine it is, before all else, the intellectual consciousness of the actual proletarian movement in which, according to our assertion, the future of communism is preparing long beforehand; so much so that the open adversaries of socialism reject it as an opinion, which, under a scientific mask, is only working out another utopia.

Thus it may happen, and that has already resulted, that the imagination of people unfamiliar with the difficulties of historic research, and the zeal of fanatics, find a stimulus and an opportunity even in historic materialism for forming a new ideology and drawing from it a new philosophy of systematic history, that is to say, history conceived as schemes or tendencies and designs. And no precaution can suffice. Our intellect is rarely contented with purely critical research; it is always attempting to convert into an element of pedantry and into a new scholasticism every discovery of thought. In a word, even the materialistic conception of history may be converted into a form of argumentation for a thesis and serve to make new fashions with the ancient prejudices like that of a history based on syllogisms, demonstrations and deductions.

To guard against this, and especially to avoid the reappearance in an indirect and disguised fashion of any form whatever of finality, it is necessary to resolve positively upon two things: First, that

all known historic conditions are circumstanced, and, second, that progress has thus far been circumscribed by various obstacles and that for this reason it has always been partial and limited.

Only a part, and, until recent times, only a small part of the human race, has traversed completely all the stages of the *processus* by the effect of which the most advanced nations have arrived at modern civil society, with the advanced technical forms founded upon the discoveries of science and with all the consequences, political, intellectual, moral, etc., which correspond to this development. By the side of the English,—to take the most striking example —who, transporting European manners with them to New Holland, have created there a center of production which already holds a notable place in the competition of the world's market, there still live, like fossils of prehistoric times, the Australian aborigines, capable only of disappearing, but incapable of adapting themselves to a civilization which was not imported among them, but next to them. In America, and especially in North America, the series of events which have brought on the development of modern society began with the importation from Europe of domestic animals and agricultural tools, the use of which in ancient times gave birth to the slow moving civilization of the Mediterranean; but this movement remained entirely inside the circle of those descended from the conquerors and colonists, while the aborigines are

lost in the mass through the intermingling of races or perish and disappear completely. Western Asia and Egypt, which already in very ancient times, as the first cradle of all our civilization, gave birth to the great semi-political formations which marked the first phases of certain and positive history, have appeared to us for centuries as crystallizations of social forms incapable of moving on of themselves to new phases of development. Upon them is the age-long weight of the barbaric camp—the dominion of the Turk. Into this stiffened mass is introduced by secret ways a modern administration, and in the name of business interests the railroads and the telegraphs push in,—bold outposts of the conquering European bank. All this stiffened mass has no hope of resuming life, heat and motion except by the ruin of the Turkish dominion, for which are being substituted in the different methods of direct and indirect conquest the dominion and the protectorate of the European bourgeoisie. That a process of transformation of backward nations or of nations arrested in their march, can be realized and hastened under external influences, India stands as a proof. This country, with its own life still surviving, re-enters vigorously under the action of England into the circulation of international activity even with its intellectual products. These are not the only contrasts in the historic physiognomy of our contemporaries. And while in Japan, by an acute and spontaneous phenomenon of imitation, there has developed, in less than thirty years, a cer-

tain assimilation of western civilization which is already moving normally the country's own energies, the forcible law of Russian conquest is dragging into the circle of modern industry, and even into great industry, certain notable portions of the country beyond the Caspian, as an outpost of the approaching acquisition to the sphere of capitalism of Central Asia and Upper Asia. The gigantic mass of China appeared to us but a few years ago as motionless in the hereditary organization of its institutions, so slow is every movement there, while for ethnic and geographical reasons almost all Africa remained impenetrable, and, it seemed, even up to the last attempts at conquest and colonization, that it was destined to offer only its borders to the process of civilization, as if we were still in the times not even of the Portuguese, but of the Greeks and Carthaginians.

These differentiations of men on the track of written and unwritten history seem to us easily explicable when they can be referred to the natural and immediate conditions which impose limits upon the development of labor. This is the case with America, which up to the arrival of the Europeans had but one cereal, maizè, and but one domestic animal for labor, the llama, and we can rejoice that the Europeans imported with themselves and their tools the ox, the ass and the horse, corn, cotton, sugarcane, coffee and finally the vine and the orange tree, creating there a new world of that glorious society which produces merchandise and which with an ex-

traordinary swiftness of movement has already traversed the two phases of the blackest slavery and the most democratic wage system. But where there is a real halt and even an attested retrogression, as in Western Asia, in Egypt, in the Balkan Peninsula and in Northern Africa,—and this arrest cannot be attributed to the change of natural conditions,—we find the problem before us which is awaiting its solution from the direct and explicit study of the social structure studied in the internal modes of its development, as in the interlacings and complications of the different nations upon that field which is ordinarily called the scene of historic struggles.

This same civilized Europe, which by the continuity of its tradition, presents the most complete diagram of its *processus,* so much so that upon this model have been conceived and constructed, thus far, all the systems of historical philosophy, this Western and Central Europe, which produced the epoch of the bourgeoisie and has sought and is seeking to impose that form of society upon the whole world by different modes of conquest, direct or indirect,—this Europe is not completely uniform in the degree of its development, and its various agglomerations, national, local and political, appear disturbed, as it were, over a decidedly sloping ladder. Upon these differences depend the conditions of relative superiority and inferiority of one country to another and the reasons, more or less advantageous or disadvantageous, for economic ex-

change; and thereon have depended, and still depend, not only the frictions and the struggles, the treaties and the wars, but also everything that with more or less precision the political writers have been able to relate to us since the Renaissance, and certainly with increasing evidence, from Louis XIV. and Colbert to our own time.

This Europe in itself is highly variegated. Here is the consummate flower of industrial and capitalist production, namely, England, while at other points survives the artisan, vigorous or rickety, at Paris and at Naples, to grasp the fact in its extreme points. Here the land is almost industrialized, as in England; and elsewhere vegetates, in various traditional forms, the stupid peasant, as in Italy and in Austria, and in the latter country more than in the former. In one country the political life of the state—suited to the prosaic consciousness of a bourgeoisie which knows its business because it has conquered the space that it occupies—is exerted in the surest and most open fashion of an explicit class domination (it will be understood that I am speaking of France). Elsewhere, and particularly in Germany, the old feudal customs, the hypocrisy of Protestantism and the cowardice of a bougeoisie which exploits favorable economic circumstances without bringing to them either intelligence or revolutionary courage, strengthen the existing state by preserving the lying appearances of an ethical mission to be accomplished. (With how many unpalatable sauces this state ethics, Prussian into the bargain, has been

served up by the heavy and pedantic German professors!) Here and there modern capitalist production is edging its way into countries which from other points of view do not enter into our movement and especially into its political side, as is the case with unhappy Poland; or again this form only penetrates indirectly, as in the Slavonic countries. But now comes the sharpest contrast, which seems destined to put under our eyes, as in an epitome, all the phrases, even the most extreme, of our history.

Russia could not have advanced, as it is now advancing, toward the great industry, without drawing from Western Europe, and especially from our charming French *Chauvinism,* that money which she would in vain have sought within her own borders, that is to say, from the conditions of her obese territorial mass, where vegetate in ancient economic forms fifty million peasants. Russia, in order to become an economic modern society ripening the conditions of a corresponding political revolution, and preparing the means which will facilitate the addition of a large part of Asia to the capitalist movement, has been led to destroy the last relics of agrarian communism (whether its origins be primitive or secondary) which had been preserved within herself up to this point in such characteristic forms and on so large a scale. Russia must capitalize herself, and to this end she must, to start with, convert land into merchandise capable of producing merchandise, and at the same time transform into miserable proletarians the excommunists of the land.

And, on the contrary, in Western and Central Europe we find ourselves at the opposite point of the series of development which has scarcely begun in Russia. Here, with us, where the bourgeoisie, with varied fortunes and triumphing over such a variety of difficulties, has already traversed so many stages of its development, it is not the recollection of primitive or secondary communism, which scarcely survives through learned combinations in the heads of scholars, but the very form of bourgeois production, which engenders in the proletarians the tendency to socialism, which presents itself in its general outlines as an indication of a new phase of history and not as the repetition of what is inevitably perishing in the Slavonic countries under our eyes.

Who could fail to see in these illustrations, which I have not sought out, but which have come almost by chance, and which can be indefinitely prolonged in a volume of economic-political geography of the present world, the evident proof of the manner in which historic conditions are all circumstanced in the forms of their development? Not only races and peoples, nations and states, but parts of nations and various regions of states, even orders and classes, are found, as it were, upon so many rounds of a very long ladder, or, rather, upon the various points of a complicated and slowly developing curve. Historic time has not marched uniformly for all men. The simple succession of generations has never been the index of the constancy and intensity

of the *processus*. Time as an abstract measure of chronology and the generations which succeed one another in approximate periods give no criterion and furnish no indication of law or of process. The developments thus far have been varied because the things accomplished in one and the same unit of time were varied. Between these varied forms of development there is an affinity or rather a similarity of movements, that is, an analogy of type, or again an identity of form; thus the advance forms may by simple contact or by violence accelerate the development of backward forms. But the important thing is to comprehend that progress, our notion of which is not merely empirical, but always circumstanced and thus limited, is not suspended over the course of human events like a destiny or a fate, nor like a commandment. And for this reason our doctrine cannot serve to represent the whole history of the human race in a unified perspective which repeats, *mutatis mutandis,* the historic philosophy from thesis to conclusion, from St. Augustine to Hegel, or, better, from the prophet Daniel to M. De Rougemont.

Our doctrine does not pretend to be the intellectual vision of a great plan or of a design, but it is merely a method of research and of conception. It is not by accident that Marx spoke of his discovery as a guiding thread, and it is precisely for this reason that it is analogous to Darwinism, which also is a method, and is not and cannot be a modern repe-

tition of the constructed or constructive natural philosophy as used by Shelling and his school.

The first to discover in the notion of progress an indication of something circumstantial and relative was the genial Saint Simon, who opposed his way of seeing to the doctrine of the eighteenth century represented by the party of Condorcet. To that doctrine, which may be called unitary, equalitarian, formal, because it regards the human race as developing upon one line of process, Saint Simon opposes the conception of the faculties and of the aptitudes which substitute themselves and compensate for each other, and thus he remains an ideologist.

To penetrate the true reasons for the relativity of progress another thing was necessary. It was necessary, first of all, to renounce those prejudices which are involved in the belief that the obstacles to the uniformity of human development rest exclusively upon natural and immediate causes. These natural obstacles are either sufficiently problematical, as is the case with races, no one of which shows the privilege of birth in its history, or they are, as is the case in geographical differences, insufficient to explain the development of the completely different historico-social conditions on one and the same geographical field. And as the historic movement dates precisely from the time when the natural obstacles have already been in great part either vanquished or notably circumscribed, thanks to the crea-

tion of an artificial field upon which it has been given to men to develop themselves further, it is evident that the successive obstacles to the uniformity of progress must be sought in the proper and intrinsic conditions of the social structure itself.

This structure has thus far started in forms of political organization, the object of which is to try to hold in equilibrium the economic inequalities; consequently this organization, as I have said more than once, is constantly unstable. From the point where there is a known history, it is the history of society tending to form the state, or having already constructed it completely. And the state is this struggle, within and without, because it is, above all, the organ and the instrument of a larger or smaller part of society against all the rest of society itself, in so far as the latter rests upon the economic domination of man over man in a more or less direct and explicit fashion, according as the different degree of the development of production, of its natural means and its artificial instruments, requires either chattel slavery, or the serfdom of the soil, or the "free" wage system. This society of antitheses, which forms a state, is always, although in different forms and various modes, the opposition of the city to the country, of the artisan to the peasant, of the proletarian to the employer, of the capitalist to the laborer, and so on *ad infinitum,* and it always ends, with various complications and various methods, in an hierarchy, whether it be in a fixed scaffolding of privilege, as in the Middle Ages,

or whether, under the disguised forms of supposed equal rights for all, it be produced by the automatic action of economic competition, as in our time.

To this economic hierarchy corresponds, according to various modes, in different countries, in different times, in different places, what I may call almost a hierarchy of souls, of intellects, of minds. That is to say, that culture, which, for the idealists, constitutes the sum of progress, has been and is by the necessities of the case very unequally distributed. The greater portion of mankind, by the quality of their occupations, are composed of individuals who are disintegrated, broken into fragments and rendered incapable of a complete and normal development. To the economics of classes and to the hierarchy of social positions corresponds the psychology of classes. The relativity of progress is then for us the inevitable consequence of class distinctions. These distinctions constitute the obstacles which explain the possibility of relative retrogression, up to the point of degeneracy and of the dissolution of an entire society. The machines, which mark the triumph of science, become, by reason of the antithetic conditions of the social plexus, instruments which impoverish millions and millions of artisans and free peasants. The progress of technique, which fills the towns with merchandise, makes more miserable and abject the condition of the peasants, and in the cities themselves it further humbles the condition of the humble. All the progress of science has served thus far to differentiate a class of scientists

and to keep ever further from culture the masses who, attached to their ceaseless daily toil, are thus feeding the whole of society.

Progress has been and is, up to the present time, partial and one-sided. The minorities which share in it call this human progress; and the proud evolutionists call this human nature which is developing. All this partial progress, which has thus far developed upon the oppression of man by man, has its foundation in the conditions of opposition, by which economic distinctions have engendered all the social distinctions; from the relative liberty of the few is born the servitude of the greater number, and law has been the protector of injustice. Progress, thus seen and clearly appreciated, appears to us as the moral and intellectual epitome of all human miseries and of all material inequalities.

To discover this inevitable relativity it was necessary that communism, born at first as an instinctive movement in the soul of the oppressed, should become a science and a political party. It was then necessary that our doctrine should give the measure of value for all past history, by discovering in every form of social organization, antithetical in its origin and organization, as they have all been up to this time, the innate incapacity for producing the conditions of a universal and uniform human progress, that is to say, by discovering the fetters which turn each benefit into an injury.

VI.

There is one question which we cannot evade: What has given birth to the belief in *historic factors?*

That is an expression familiar to many and often found in the writings of many scholars, scientists and philosophers, and of those commentators who, by their reasonings or by their combinations, add a little to simple historic narration and utilize this opinion as an hypothesis to find a starting point in the immense mass of human facts, which, at first sight and after first examination, appear so confused and irreducible. This belief, this current opinion, has become for reasoning historians, or even for rationalists, a semi-doctrine, which has recently been urged several times, as a decisive argument, against the unitary theory of the materialistic conception. And indeed, this belief is so deeply rooted and this opinion so widespread, of history being only intelligible as the juncture and the meeting of various factors, that, in consequence, many of those who speak of social materialism, whether they be its partisans or adversaries, believe that they save themselves from embarrassment by affirming that this whole doctrine consists in the fact that it attributes the preponderance or the decisive action to the *economic factor.*

It is very important to take account of the fashion in which this belief, this opinion, or this semi-doc-

trine takes its rise, because real and fruitful criticism consists principally in knowing and understanding the motive of what we declare an error. It does not suffice to reject an opinion by characterizing it as false doctrine. Error always arises from some ill-understood side of an incomplete experience, or from some subjective imperfection. It does not suffice to reject the error; we must overcome it, explain it and outgrow it.

Every historian, at the beginning of his work, performs, so to speak, an act of elimination. First, he makes erasures, as it were, in a continuous series of events; then he dispenses with numerous and varied suppositions and precedents; more than this, he tears up and decomposes a complicated tissue. Thus, to begin with, he must fix a point, a line, a boundary, as he chooses; he must say, for example: I wish to relate the beginning of the war between the Greeks and the Persians, or to inquire how Louis XVI. was brought to convene the States General. The narrator finds himself, in a word, confronted with a *complexus* of accomplished facts and of facts on the point of being produced, which in their totality present a certain aspect. Upon the attitude which he takes depends the form and the style of every narration, because to compose it he must take his point of departure from things already accomplished, in order to see henceforth how they have continued to develop.

Yet into this *complexus* he must introduce a certain degree of analysis, resolving it into groups and

into aspects of facts, or into concurrent elements, which afterwards appear at a certain moment as independent categories. It is the state in a certain form and with certain powers; it is the laws, which determine, by what they command or what they prohibit, certain relations; it is the manners and customs which reveal to us tendencies, needs, ways of thinking, of believing, of imagining; altogether it is a multitude of men living and working together, with a certain distribution of tasks and occupations; he observes then the thoughts, the ideas, the inclinations, the passions, the desires, the aspirations which arise and develop from this varied mode of coexistence and from its frictions. Let a change be produced, and it will show itself in one of the sides or one of the aspects of the empirical *complexus*, or in all of these within a longer or a shorter time; for example, the state extends its boundaries, or changes its internal limits as regards society by increasing or diminishing its powers and its attributes, or by changing the mode of action of one or the other; or, again, the law modifies its dispositions, or it expresses and affirms itself through new organs; or, again, finally, behind the change of exterior and daily habits, we discover a change in the sentiments, the thoughts and the inclinations of the men variously distributed in the different social classes, who mingle, change, replace each other, disappear or reappear. All this may be sufficiently understood, in its exterior forms and outlines, through the usual endowments of normal intelligence which is not yet

aided, corrected or completed by science strictly so-called. Assembling within precise limits a conception of such facts is the true and proper object of narration, which is so much the clearer, more vivid and more exact, as it takes the form of a monograph; witness Thucydides in the Peloponnesian war.

Society already evolved in a certain fashion, society already arrived at a certain degree of development, society already so complicated that it conceals the economic substructure which supports all the rest, has not revealed itself to the simple narrators, except in these visible facts, in these most apparent results, and in these most significant symptoms which are the political forms, the legal dispositions and the partisan passions. The narrator, both because he lacks any theoretical doctrine regarding the true sources of the historic movement, and by the very attitude which he takes on the subject of the things which he unites according to the appearances which they have come to assume, cannot reduce them to unity, unless it be as a result of a single, immediate intuition, and if he is an artist, this intuition takes on a color in his mind and transforms itself there into dramatic action. His task is finished if he succeeds in massing a certain number of facts and events in certain limits and confines over which the observer may look as on a clear perspective; in the same way, purely descriptive geography has accomplished its task, if it sums up in a vivid and clear design a concourse of physical causes which deter-

mine the immediate aspect of the Gulf of Naples, for example, without going back to its genesis.

It is in this need of graphic narration that arises the first intuitive, palpable, and, I might almost say, æsthetic and artistic occasion for all those abstractions and those generalizations, which are finally summed up in the semi-doctrine of the so-called factors.

Here are two notable men, the Gracchi, who wished to put an end to the process of appropriation of the public land and to prevent the agglomeration of the *latifundium,* which was diminishing or causing to completely disappear the class of small proprietors, that is to say, of the free men, who are the foundation and the condition of the democratic life of the ancient city. What were the causes of their failure? Their aim is clear, their spirit, their origin, their character, their heroism are manifest. They have against them other men with other interests and with other designs. The struggle appears to the mind at first merely as a struggle of intentions and passions, which unfolds and comes to an end by the aid of means which are permitted by the political form of the state and by the use or abuse or the public powers. Here is the situation: the city ruling in different manners over other cities or over territories which have lost all character of autonomy; within this city a very decided differentiation between rich and poor; and facing the comparatively small group of the oppressors and the all-powerful, stands the immense mass of the proleta-

rians, who are on the point of losing or who have already lost the consciousness and the political strength of a body of citizens, the mass which therefore suffers itself to be deceived and corrupted, and which will soon decay till it is but a servile accessory to its aristocratic exploiters. There is the material of the narrator, and he cannot take account of the fact otherwise than in the immediate conditions of the fact itself. The complete whole is directly seen and forms the stage on which the events unfold, but if the narration is to have solidity, vividness and perspective there must be points of departure and ways of interpretation.

In this consists the first origin of those abstractions, which little by little take away from the different parts of a given social *complexus* their quality of simple sides or aspects of a whole, and it is their ensuing generalization which little by little leads to the doctrine of factors.

These factors, to express it in another way, arise in the mind as a sequence of the abstraction and generalization of the immediate aspects of the apparent movement, and they have an equal value with that of all other empirical concepts. Whatever be the domain of knowledge in which they arise, they persist until they are reduced and eliminated by a new experience, or until they are absorbed by a conception more general, genetic, evolutionary or dialetic. Was it not necessary that in the empirical analysis and in the immediate study of the

causes and the effects of certain definite phenomena, for example the phenomena of heat, the mind should first stop at this presumption and this persuasion, that it could and should attribute them to a subject, which if it was never for any physicist a true and substantial entity, was certainly considered as a definite and specific force, namely, heat. Now we see that at a given moment, as a result of new experiences, this heat is resolved in given conditions into a certain quantity of motion. Still further, our thought is now on the way toward resolving all these physical factors into the flux of one universal energy, in which the hypotheses of the atoms, in the extent to which it is necessary, loses all residue of metaphysical survival.

Was it not inevitable, as a first step of knowledge in what concerns the problem of life, to spend a considerable time in the separate study of the organs and to reduce them to systems? Without this anatomy, which seems too material and too gross, no progress in these studies would have been possible; and nevertheless, above the unknown genesis and co-ordination of such an analytic multiplicity, there were evolving, uncertain and vague, the generic conceptions of life, soul, etc. In these mental creations have long been seen that biological unity which has finally found its object in the certain beginning of the cell and in its *processus* of immanent multiplication.

More difficult certainly was the way which the thought had to traverse to reconstruct the genesis of

all the facts of psychic life, from the most elementary successions up to the most complex derived products. Not only for reasons of theoretical difficulties, but in consequence of popular prejudices, the unity and continuity of psychic phenomena appeared, up to the time of Herbart, as separated and divided into so many factors, faculties of the soul.

The interpretation of the historico-social *processus* met the same difficulties; it also was obliged to stop at first in the provisional view of factors. And that being so, it is easy for us now to find again the first origin of that opinion in the necessity that the historians have of finding in the facts that they relate with more or less artistic talent and in different professional views, certain points of immediate orientation, such as may be offered by the study of the apparent movement of human events.

But in this apparent movement, there are the elements of a more exact view. These concurrent factors, which abstract thought conceives and then isolates, have never been seen acting each for itself. On the contrary, they act in such a manner that it gives birth to the concept of reciprocal action. Moreover, these factors themselves arise at a given moment, and it is not until later that they acquired that physiognomy which they have in the particular narration. This State, it is well known, arose at a given moment. As for every rule of law, it may either be remembered or conjectured that it went into effect under such or such circumstances. As

for many customs, it may be remembered that they were introduced at a given moment; and the simplest comparisons of the facts in different times or different places would show how society, as a whole, and in its character of being an aggregation of different classes, had taken and took continuously various forms.

The reciprocal action of the different factors, without which not even the simplest narration would be possible, like the more or less exact information upon the origins and the variations of the factors themselves, called for research and thought more than did the constructive narration of those great historians who are real artists. And, in effect, the problems which arise spontaneously from the data of history, combined with other theoretical elements, gave birth to the different so-called practical disciplines, which in a more or less rapid fashion and with varying success, have developed from the ancients up to our days, from ethics to the philosophy of law, from politics to sociology, from law to economics.

Now with the rise and formation of so many disciplines, through the inevitable division of labor, *points of view* have been multiplied out of all proportion. It is certain that for the first and immediate analysis of the multiple aspects of the social *complexus,* a long labor of partial abstraction was necessary: which has always inevitably resulted in one-sided views. This can be shown, in a clearer and more evident manner than for any other de-

main, in that of law and its various generalizations, including the philosophy of law. By reason of these abstractions, which are inevitable in particular and empirical analysis, and by the effect of the division of labor, the different sides and different manifestations of the social *complexus* were, from time to time, fixed and stratified in general conceptions and categories. The works, the effects, the emanations, the effusions of human activity,—law, economic forms, principles of conduct, etc.,—were, so to speak, translated and transformed into laws, into imperatives and into principles which remained placed above man himself. And from time to time it has been necessary to discover anew this simple truth: that the only permanent and sure fact, that is to say, the only datum from which departs and to which returns every practical detail of discipline, is men grouped in a determined social form by means of determined connections. The different analytical disciplines, which illustrate the facts that develop in history, have finally given rise to the need of a common and general social science, which renders possible the unification of the historic *processus,* and the materialistic doctrine marks precisely the final term, the apex of this unification.

But that has not been, nor ever will be, lost time which is expended in the preliminary and lateral analysis of complex facts. To the methodical division of labor we owe precise learning, that is to say, the mass of knowledge passed into the sieve, systematized, without which social history would al-

ways be wandering in a purely abstract domain, in questions of form and terminology. The separate study of the historico-social factors has served, like any other empirical study which does not transcend the apparent movement of things, to improve the instrument of observation and to permit us to find again in the facts themselves, which have been artificially abstracted, the keystones which bind them into the social *complexus*. The different disciplines which are considered as isolated and independent in the hypotheses of the concurrent factors in the formation of history, both by reason of the degree of development which they have reached, the materials which they have gathered, and the methods which they have elaborated, have to-day become quite indispensable for us, if one desires to reconstruct any portion out of past times. Where would our historic science be without the one-sidedness of philology, which is the fundamental instrument of all research, and where should we have found the guiding thread of a history of juridical institutions, which returns again from itself to so many other facts and to so many other combinations, without the obstinate faith of the Romanists in the universal excellence of the Roman law, which engendered with generalized law and with the philosophy of law so many problems which serve as points of departure for sociology?

It is thus, after all, that the historic factors, of which so many speak, and which are mentioned in so

many works, indicate something which is much less than the truth, but much more than simple error, in the ordinary sense of a blunder, of an illusion. They are the necessary product of a knowledge which is in the course of development and formation. They arise from the necessity of finding a point of departure in the confused spectacle which human events present to him who wishes to narrate them; and they serve thenceforth, so to speak, as a title, category or index to that inevitable division of labor, by the extension of which the historico-social material has, up to this time, been theoretically elaborated. In this domain of knowledge, as well as in that of the natural sciences, the unity of real principle and the unity of formal treatment are never found at the first start, but only after a long and troublous road. So that again from this point of view the analogy affirmed by Engels between the discovery of historical materialism and that of the conservation of energy appears to us excellent.

The provisional orientation, according to the convenient system of what are called factors, may, under given circumstances, be useful also to us who profess an altogether unitary principle of historic interpretation, if we do not wish simply to rest in the domain of theory, but wish to illustrate, through personal research, a definite period of history. As in that case we must proceed to direct and detailed research, we must first of all follow the groups of facts that seem pre-eminent, independent, or detached in the aspects of immediate experience. We should not

imagine, in fact, that the unitary principle so well established, at which we have arrived in the general conception of history, may, like a talisman, act always and at first sight, as an infallible method of resolving into simple elements the immense area and the complicated gearing of society. The underlying economic structure, which determines all the rest, is not a simple mechanism whence emerge, as immediate, automatic and mechanical effects, institutions, laws, customs, thoughts, sentiments, ideologies. From this substructure to all the rest, the process of derivation and of mediation is very complicated, often subtile, tortuous and not always legible.

The social organization is, as we already know, constantly unstable, although that does not seem evident to every one, except at the time when the instability enters upon that acute period which is called a revolution. This instability, with the constant struggles in the bosom of that same organized society, excludes the possibility for men coming to an agreement which might involve a new start at living an animal life. It is the antagonisms which are the principal cause of progress (Marx). But it is equally true, notwithstanding, that in this unstable organization, in which is given to us the inevitable form of domination and subjection, intelligence is always developed not only unequally, but quite imperfectly, incongruously and partially. There has been and there is still in society what we may call a hierarchy of intelligence, sentiments and conceptions. To suppose that men, always and in all cases, have

had an approximately clear consciousness of their own situation, and of what was the most rational thing to do, is to suppose the improbable and, indeed, the unreal.

Forms of law, political acts and attempts at social organization were, and they still are, sometimes fortunate, sometimes mistaken, that is to say, disproportionate and unsuitable. History is full of errors; and this means that if all was necessary, granted the relative intelligence of those who have to solve a difficulty or to find a solution for a given problem, etc., if everything in it has a sufficient reason, yet everything in it was not reasonable, in the sense which the optimists give to this word. To state it more fully, the determined causes of all changes, that is to say the modified economic conditions, have ended and end by causing to be found, sometimes through tortuous ways, the suitable forms of law, the appropriate political orders and the more or less perfect means of social adjustment. But it must not be thought that the instinctive wisdom of the reasoning animal has been manifested, or is manifested, definitely and simply, in the complete and clear understanding of all situations, and that we have left only the very simple task of following the deductive road from the economic situation to all the rest. Ignorance—which, in its turn, may be explained—is an important reason for the manner in which history is made; and, to ignorance we must add the brutishness which is never completely subdued and all the passions, and all the injustices, and the va-

rious forms of corruption, which were and are the necessary product of a society organized in such a way, that the domination of man over man in it is inevitable, and that from this domination falsehood, hypocrisy, presumption and baseness were and are inseparable. We may, without being utopians, but simply because we are critical communists, foresee, as we do in fact foresee, the coming of a society which, developing from the present society and from its very contrasts by the laws inherent in its historic development, will end in an association without class antagonisms; which will have for its consequence that regulated production will eliminate from life the element of chance which, thus far, has been revealed in history as a multiform cause of accidents and incidents. But that is the future, and it is neither the present nor the past. If we propose to ourselves, on the contrary, to penetrate into the historic events which have developed up to our own times, by taking, as we do, for a guiding thread the variations of the forms of the underlying economic structure up to the simplest datum in the variations of the tool of production, we must become fully conscious of the difficulty of the problem which we are setting ourselves: because here we have not merely to open our eyes and behold, but to make a supreme effort of thought, with the aim of triumphing over the multiform spectacle of immediate experience to reduce its elements into a genetic series. That is why I said that, in particular investigations, we must ourselves start from those groups of ap-

parently isolated facts, and from this heterogeneous mass, in a word, from that empirical study, whence arose the belief in factors, which afterwards became a semi-doctrine.

It is useless to attempt at counterbalancing these essential difficulties by the metaphorical hypothesis, often equivocal, and after all of a purely analogical value, of the so-called social organism. It was necessary too that the mind should pass through even this hypothesis, which so shortly became phraseology pure and simple. It indeed prepares the way for the comprehension of the historic movement as springing from the laws immanent in society itself, and thereby excludes the arbitrary, the transcendental and the irrational. But the metaphor has no further application; and the particular, critical and circumstantial research into historic facts is the sole source of that concrete and positive knowledge which is necessary to the complete development of economic materialism.

VII.

Ideas do not fall from heaven, and nothing comes to us in a dream. The change in the ways of thinking, lately produced by the historic doctrine which we are here examining and commenting upon, takes place at first slowly and afterwards with an increasing rapidity, precisely in that period of human development, in which were realized the great politico-economic revolutions, that is to say, in that epoch

which, considered in its political forms, is called liberal, but which, considered in its basis, by reason of the domination of capital over the proletarian mass, is the epoch of anarchical production. The change in ideas, even to the creation of new methods of conception, has reflected little by little the experience of a new life. This, in the revolutions of the last two centuries, was little by little despoiled of the mythical, religious and mystical envelopes in proportion as it acquired the practical and precise consciousness of its immediate and direct conditions. Human thought, also, which sums up this life and theorizes upon it, has little by little been plundered of its theological and metaphysical hypotheses to take refuge finally in this prosaic assertion: in the interpretation of history we must limit ourselves to the objective co-ordination of the determining conditions and of the determined effects. The materialistic conception marks the culminating point of this new tendency in the investigation of the historic-social laws, in so far as it is not a particular case of a generic sociology, or of a generic philosophy of the State, of law, and of history, but the solution of all doubts and all uncertainties which accompany the other forms of philosophizing upon human affairs, and the beginning of their integral interpretation.

It is thus an easy thing, especially in the way it has been done by certain shallow critics, to find precursors for Marx and Engels, who first defined this doctrine in its fundamental points. And when did it

ever occur to any of their disciples, even of the strictest school, to represent these two thinkers as miracle-workers? What is more, if we wish to go on a search after the premises of the logical creation of Marx and Engels, it will not suffice to stop at those who are called the precursors of socialism, Saint-Simon for example, and his predecessors, or the philosophers, particularly Hegel, or the economists who had laid bare the anatomy of the society which produces commodities; we must go back to the very formation of modern society, and then at last declare triumphantly that the theory is a plagarism from the things that it explains.

The truth is that the real precursors of the new doctrine were the facts of modern history, which has become so transparent and so explanatory of itself since the accomplishment in England of the great industrial revolution at the end of the eighteenth century, and since the great social upheaval took place in France. These things, *mutatis mutandis,* have subsequently been reproduced, in various combinations and in milder forms, throughout the whole civilized world. And what else is our thought at bottom if not the conscious and systematic complement of experience, and what is this last if not the reflection and the mental elaboration of the things and the processes which arise and unfold either outside our volition, or through the work of our activity; and what is genius but the individualized, derived and acute form of thought, which arises through the suggestion of experience, in many

men of the same epoch, but which remains in most of them fragmentary, incomplete, uncertain, wavering and partial?

Ideas do not fall from heaven; and what is more, like the other products of human activity, they are formed in given circumstances, in the precise fullness of time, through the action of definite needs, thanks to the repeated attempts at their satisfaction, and by the discovery of such and such other means of proof which are, as it were, the instruments of their production and their elaboration. Even ideas involve a basis of social conditions; they have their technique; thought also is a form of work. To rob the one and the other, ideas and thought, of the conditions and environment of their birth and their development, is to disfigure their nature and their meaning.

To show how the materialistic conception of history arises precisely in given conditions, not as a personal and tentative opinion of two writers, but as the new conquest of thought by the inevitable suggestion of a new world which is in process of birth, that is to say the proletarian revolution, that was the object of my first essay, "In Memory of the Communist Manifesto." That is, to repeat, a new historic situation found its complement in its appropriate mental instrument.

To imagine now that this intellectual production might have been realized at any time and at any place, would be to take absurdity for the ruling

principle in research. To transport ideas arbitrarily from the basis and the historic conditions in which they arise to any other basis whatever, is like taking the irrational for the basis of reasoning. Why should one not fancy equally that the ancient city, in which arose Greek art and science and Roman law, remaining all the while an ancient democratic city, with slavery, might at the same time acquire and develop all the conditions of modern technique? Why not believe that the trade guild of the Middle Ages, remaining all the while on its inflexible mould, should take its way to the conquest of the world market without the conditions of unlimited competition, which actually began by its destruction and negation? Why not imagine a fief which, remaining a fief all the while, should become a factory producing commodities exclusively? Why could not Michel de Lando have written the Communist Manifesto? Why could we not also believe that the discoveries of modern science could have proceeded from the brains of men of no matter what other time and place, that is to say, before determined conditions had given rise to determined needs, and before repeated and accumulated experiences should have provided for the satisfaction of these needs?

Our doctrine assumes the broad, conscious and continuous development of modern technique, and with it that society which produces commodities in the antagonisms of competition, that society which as a first condition and an indispensable means for its own perpetuation presupposes capitalist accumu-

lation in the form of private property; that society which continually produces and reproduces proletarians, and which if it is to perpetuate itself, must incessantly revolutionize its tools, and with them the State and its legal gearings. This society, which, by the very laws of its movement, has laid bare its own anatomy, produces by its reaction the materialistic conception. Even as it has produced in socialism its positive negation, so it has engendered in the new historic doctrine its ideal negation. If history is the product, not arbitrary, but necessary and normal, of men in so far as they are developing, and if they are developing in so far as they are making social experiments, and if they are experimenting in so far as they are making improvements in their labor, which accumulate and preserve products and results, the phase of development in which we live cannot be the last and final phase, and the contrasts which are intimately bound to it and inherent in it are the productive forces of new conditions. And this is how the period of the great economic and political revolutions of these last two centuries has ripened in the mind these two concepts: the immanence and constancy of the *processus* in historic facts, and the materialist doctrine, which is at bottom the objective theory of social revolutions.

It is beyond doubt that to reascend through the centuries and reconstruct in our thought the development of social ideas to the extent that we find their documents in writers, is something always very instructive, and serving especially to add to our

critical knowledge of our concepts as of our ways of thinking. Such a return of the mind over its historic premises, when it does not lead us astray into the empiricism of a boundless erudition, and does not lead us to set up hastily vain analogies, serves without any doubt to give suppleness and a persuasive force to the forms of our scientific activity. In the sum of our science we find again, in fact and through the approximative continuity of tradition, the excellence of all that has been found, conceived and proved, not only in modern times but even in ancient Greece, where first begins precisely and in a definite fashion for the human race the orderly development of conscious, reflective and methodical thought. It would be impossible to take a single step in scientific research without employing means long ago found and tried, such for example as logic and mathematics. To think otherwise would be to assume that each generation must begin over again all the work done since the childhood of humanity.

But it was not given either to the ancient authors in the limited circle of their urban republics, nor to the writers of the Renaissance, always drifting between an imaginary return to antiquity and the need of grasping intellectually the new world in process of birth, to arrive at the precise analysis of the last elements from which society results, and which the incomparable genius of Aristotle did not see, and did not understand beyond the limits within which passes the life of the typical citizen.

The investigation of the social structure, consid-

ered in its manners of origin and *processus,* became active and penetrating and took on multiform aspects in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when economics took shape and when under the different names of "Natural Rights," "The Spirit of the Laws," or "The Social Contract," it was attempted to resolve into causes, into factors and into logical and psychological data, the multiform and often obscure spectacle of a life in which was preparing the greatest revolution ever known. These doctrines, whatever may have been the subjective intention and spirit of the authors—as in the contrasting cases of the conservative Hobbes and the proletarian Rousseau—were all revolutionary in their substance and their effects. Under all of them is always found, as a stimulus and motive, the material and moral needs of a new age, which, by reason of historic conditions, were those of the bourgeoisie. Thus it was necessary to wage war in the name of liberty upon tradition, the Church, privileges, fixed classes, that is to say, the orders and conditions, and consequently upon the State which was or appeared to be their author, and then upon the special privileges of commerce, the arts, labor and science. And man was studied in an abstract fashion, that is to say, individuals taken separately, emancipated and delivered by a logical abstraction from their historic connection and from every social necessity: in the mind of many the concept of society was reduced to atoms, and it even seemed natural to the greatest number to believe that society is only the sum of the individuals

composing it. The abstract categories of individual psychology sufficed for the explanation of all human facts; and this is how in all these systems, nothing is spoken of but fear, self-love, egoism, voluntary obedience, tendency toward happiness, the original goodness of man, the freedom of contract and of the moral consciousness, and of the moral instinct or sense, and also many other similar abstract and generic things, as if they were sufficient to explain history, and to create a new history out of its fragments.

By the fact that all society was entering upon an acute crisis, its horror at the antique, at what was superannuated, at what was traditional and had been organized for centuries, and the presentiment of a renovation of all human life, finally produced a total eclipse of the ideas of historic necessity and social necessity, that is to say, of those ideas which, barely indicated by the ancient philosophers, and so developed in our century, had at this period of revolutionary rationalism only rare representatives, like Vico, Montesquieu, and, in part, Quesnay. In this historic situation, which gave birth to a literature that was nimble, destructive and very popular, is found the reason for what Louis Blanc with a certain emphasis has called individualism. Later some have thought they saw in this word the expression of a permanent fact in human nature, which especially might serve as a decisive argument against socialism.

A singular spectacle, and a singular contrast! Cap-

ital, however produced, tended to overcome all previous forms of production, and, breaking every bond and boundary, to become the direct or indirect master of society, as, in fact, it has become in the greater part of the world; hence it resulted, that apart from all forms of modern misery and the new hierarchy in which we live, there was realized the most acute antithesis of all history, that is to say, the existing anarchy of production in the whole of society, and an iron despotism in the mode of production in each workshop and each factory! And the thinkers, the philosophers, the economists and the popularizers of the eighteenth century saw nothing but liberty and equality! All reasoned in the same way; all started from the same premises, which brought them to conclude that liberty must be obtained from a government of pure administration, or that they were democrats or even communists. The approaching reign of liberty was before the eyes of all as a certain event, provided they could suppress the bonds and fetters which forced ignorance and the despotism of church and state had imposed upon men, good by nature. These fetters did not appear to be conditions and boundaries within which men were found by the laws of their development, and by the effect of the antagonistic and thus uncertain and tortuous movement of history, but simply obstacles from which the methodical use of reason was to deliver us. In this idealism, which reached its culminating point in certain heroes of the French Revolution, is the seed of a limitless faith in the certain progress of the

whole human race. For the first time, the concept of humanity appeared in all its branches, unmingled with religious ideas or hypotheses. The boldest of these idealists were the extreme materialists, because, denying every religious fiction, they assigned this earth as a certain domain to the necessity of happiness provided that reason might open the way.

Never were ideas abused in so inhuman a fashion as between the close of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth. The lesson of things was very hard, the saddest disillusions arose and a radical upheaval followed in the minds of men. Facts, in a word, proved to be contrary to all expectations; and this at first produced a profound discouragement among the disillusioned, which, notwithstanding, gave rise to the desire and the need of new investigations. We know that Saint Simon and Fourier, in whom operated precisely at the beginning of the century, in the exclusive forms of the ideas of premature genius, the reaction against the immediate results of the politico-economic revolution, arose resolutely, the first against the jurists, and the second against the economists.

In fact, when once the obstacles to liberty, which had been characteristic of other times, had been suppressed, new obstacles, graver and more painful, had replaced them, and, as equal happiness for all was not realized, society remained in its political form as it had been before, an organization of inequalities. It must be, then, that society is something autono-

mous, innate, a complex automaton of relations and conditions, which defies the subjective good intentions of each of the members who compose it, and which escapes from the illusions and the designs of the idealists. It thus follows a course of its own from which we may infer certain laws of process and development, but does not suffer us to impose laws upon it. By this transformation in the minds of men, the nineteenth century heralded itself as the century of historic science and of sociology.

The principle of development has, indeed, since then, invaded all domains of thought. In this century, the grammar of history has been discovered, and thus the key has been found to explore the genesis of myths. The embryonic traces of prehistory have been sought out, and, for the first time, the processes of political and legal forms have been arranged into a series. The nineteenth century heralded itself as the century of sociology in the person of Saint Simon, in whom, as happens with the self-taught precursors of genius, we find confused together the germs of so many contradictory tendencies. In this aspect the materialistic conception is a result; but it is a result which is the complement of the whole process of formation; and as a result and a complement it is also the simplification of all historic science and of all sociology, because it takes us back from things derived and from complex conditions to elemental functions. And that is brought about by the direct suggestion of new dynamic experience.

The laws of economics, such as they are of themselves and their own inherent force, have triumphed over all illusions and have shown themselves to be the directing power of social life. The great industrial revolution which was produced made it clear that social classes, if they are not a fact of nature, are still less a consequence of chance and of free will; they arise historically and socially in a determined form of production. And who, in truth, has not seen the birth under his eyes of new proletarians upon the economic ruin of so many classes of small proprietors, small peasants and artisans; and who has not been in a position to discover the method of this new creation of a new social status, to which so many men were reduced and in which they were necessarily obliged to live. Who has not been in a position to discover that money, transformed into capital, had succeeded, in a few years, in becoming master by the attraction which it exercises over the labor of free men, in whom the necessity of selling themselves freely as wage workers had been prepared long before by so many ingenious legal processes and by violent or indirect expropriation? And who has not seen the new cities rise around factories and create around their circumference this desolating poverty, which is no longer the effect of individual misfortune, but the condition and the source of wealth? And in this new poverty were numerous women and children, arising for the first time from an unknown existence to take their place on the page of history as a sinister illustration of a

society of equals. And who did not feel—even if that had not been announced in the so-called doctrine of the Rev. Malthus—that the number of guests which this mode of economic organization can entertain, if it is sometimes insufficient for him who, by reason of the favorable state of production, has need of hands, is often also superabundant, and therefore finds no occupation and becomes a source of danger? It becomes evident, also, that the rapid and violent economic transformation which was accomplished openly in England had succeeded there, because that country had been able to build up for itself, as compared with the rest of Europe, a monopoly till then unknown, and because to maintain this monopoly an unscrupulous policy had been rendered necessary, and that permitted all, for one happy moment, to translate into prose the ideological myth of the state, which was to be the guardian and the preceptor of the people.

This immediate perception of these consequences of the new life was the origin of the pessimism, more or less romantic, of the *laudatores temporis acti* from De Maistre to Carlyle. The satire of liberalism invaded minds and literature at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Then begins that criticism of society, which is the first step in all sociology. It was necessary before all else to overthrow the ideology, which had accumulated and expressed itself in so many doctrines of the Natural Right or the Social Contract. It was necessary to get into contact with the facts which the rapid events of so

intensive a *processus* imposed upon the attention in forms so new and startling.

Here appears Owen, incomparable at all points of view, but especially for the clearness which he displayed in the determination of the causes of the new poverty, even though he was but a child in his quest of the means for overcoming it. It was necessary to arrive at the objective criticism of economics, which appeared for the first time, in one-sided and reactionary forms, in Sismondi. In this period where the conditions of a new historic science were ripening, arose so many different forms of socialism, utopian, one-sided or completely extravagant, which never reached the proletarians, either because these had no political consciousness, or if they had any, it manifested itself in sudden starts, as in the French conspiracies and riots from 1830 to 1848, or they kept on the political ground of immediate reforms, as is the case with the Chartists. And nevertheless all this socialism, however Utopian, fantastic and ideological it may have been, was an immediate and often salutary criticism of economics—a one-sided criticism, indeed, which lacked the scientific complement of a general historical conception.

All these forms of criticism, partial, one-sided and incomplete had their culmination in scientific socialism. This is no longer subjective criticism applied to things but the discovery of the self-criticism which is in the things themselves. The real criticism of society is society, itself, which, by the antithetic conditions of the contrasts upon which it rests,

engenders from itself, within itself, the contradiction, and finally triumphs over this by its passage into a new form. The solution of the existing antitheses is the proletariat, which the proletarians themselves know or do not know. Even as their misery has become the condition of present society, so in their misery is the justification of the new proletarian revolution. It is in this passage from the criticism of subjective thought, which examines things outside and imagines it can correct them at once, to the understanding of the self-criticism exercised by society over itself in the immanence of its own *processus*—it is in this only that the dialectic of history consists, which Marx and Engels, in so far as they were materialists, drew from the idealism of Hegel. But on the final reckoning it matters little whether the literary men, who knew no other meaning for dialectics than that of an artificial sophistry nor whether the doctors and scholars who are never apt to go beyond the knowledge of particular facts can eyer account themselves for these hidden and complicated forms of thought.

But the great economic transformation, which has furnished the materials composing modern society, in which the empire of capitalism has arrived at the limit of its complete development, would not have been so immediately and so suggestively instructive, if it had not been luminously illustrated by the bewildering and catastrophic movement of the French Revolution. This put in evidence, like a tragedy on

the stage, all the antagonistic forces of modern society, because this society has developed on the ruins of previous forms, and because, in so short a time and with so hasty a march, it has traversed the phases of its birth and its establishment.

The revolution ensued from the obstacles which the bourgeoisie had to overcome by violence, since it appeared from evidence that the passage from the old forms to the new forms of production—or of property, if we borrow the language of jurists—could not be realized by the quieter ways of successive and gradual reforms. It brought in its train the upheaval, the friction and the intermingling of all the old classes of the Ancient Regime, and the rapid and bewildering formation at the same time of new classes, in the very rapid but very intensive period of ten years, which, compared with the ordinary history of other times and other countries, seems to us like centuries. This rapid succession of monumental events brought to light the most characteristic moments and aspects of the new or modern society, and that so much the more clearly since the militant bourgeoisie had already created for itself intellectual means and organs which had given it with the theory of its own work the reflex consciousness of its movement.

The violent expropriation of the great part of the old property, that is to say, of the property crystallized in fiefs, in royal and princely domains and in mortmain, with the real and personal rights derived therefrom, put at the disposal of the state, which

by the necessity of things had become an exceptional, terrible and all-powerful government, an extraordinary mass of economic resources; thus, there were, on the one side, the singular policy of the assignats which finally annulled themselves, and on the other side, the formation of the new proprietors who owed their fortune to the chances of gambling, to intrigue and to speculation. And who again would have dared thereafter to swear upon the ancient, sacred altar of property, when his recent and authentic title rested in so evident a manner upon the knowledge of fortunate circumstances? If it had ever passed through the head of so many troublesome philosophers, beginning with the Sophists, that law is a creation of man, useful and convenient, this heretical proposition might seem thenceforth a simple and intuitive truth to the meanest of the beggars in Paris. Had not the proletarians with all the common people given the impulse to the revolution in general by the expected movements of April, 1789, and did they not afterwards find themselves, as it were, driven anew from the stage of history after the failure of the revolt of Prairial in 1795? Had they not carried on their shoulders all the ardent defenders of liberty and equality? Had they not held in their hands the Paris Commune, which was, for a time, the impulsive organ of the Assembly and of all France; had they not finally the bitter disillusion of having created new masters for themselves with their own hands? The bewildering consciousness of this disillusion constitutes the psychological motive,

rapid and immediate, of the conspiracy of Babeuf, which, for that very reason, is a great fact in history, and bears in itself all the elements of objective tragedy.

The land which fief and mortmain had, as it were, bound to a body, to a family, to a title, now, delivered from its bonds, had become a commodity, to serve as a basis and instrument for the production of merchandise; so docile a commodity, that it was put into circulation in the form of morsels of paper. And around these symbols, multiplied to such a degree over the things that they were to represent that they finished by no longer having any value, Business came forth, a giant, arising, from all sides, on the shoulders of those most wretched in their poverty, and through all the devious ways of politics; it was especially shameless in its way of taking part in war and its glorious successes. Even the rapid progress of technique, hastened by the urgency of circumstances, gave material and occasion to the prosperity of business.

The laws of bourgeois economics, which are those of individual production in the antagonistic field of competition, revolted furiously, through violence and ruse, against the idealistic efforts of a revolutionary government which, strong in its certainty of saving its country, and stronger still in its illusion of founding for eternity the liberty of equals, believed it was possible to suppress gambling by the guillotine, to eliminate Business by closing the Stock Exchange and to assure existence to the common peo-

ple by fixing the maximum of prices for objects of prime necessity. Commodities, prices and Business reasserted with violence their own liberty against those who wished to preach to them and impose ethics upon them.

Thermidor, whatever may have been the original intentions of the Thermidorians, whether vile, cowardly, or misguided, was, in its hidden causes as in its apparent effects, the triumph of Business over democratic idealism. The constitution of 1793, which marks the extreme limit that can be reached by the democratic ideal, was never put into practice. The grave pressure of circumstances, the menace of the foreigner, the different forms of internal rebellion, from the Girondists to the Vendée, rendered necessary an exceptional government, which was the Terror, born of fear. In proportion as dangers ceased, the need of the terror ceased. But the democracy shattered itself against the Business which was bringing into existence the property of new proprietors. The constitution of the year III. consecrated the principle of moderate liberalism, whence proceeds all the constitutionalism of the European continent; but it was, before all else, the road leading to the guaranty of property. To change the proprietors while preserving property —that is the banner, the watchword, the ensign which defied through the years from Aug. 10, 1792, the violent tumults as well as the bold designs of those who attempted to found society upon virtue, equality and Spartan abnegation. But the Directory was the

footpath by which the revolution arrived at the downfall of itself as an idealistic effort; and with the Directory, which was open and professed corruption, this banner became a reality; the proprietors are changed, but property is saved. And, indeed, to raise upon so many ruins a stable edifice, there was need of real force; and this was found in that strange adventurer of incomparable genius, upon whom fortune had imperially smiled, and he was the only one who possessed the virtue of putting an end to this gigantic fable, because there was in him neither shadow nor trace of moral scruples.

In this furor of events strange things happened. The citizens armed for the defense of their country, victorious beyond its frontiers over surrounding Europe, into which with their conquest they carried the revolution, transformed themselves into a soldiery to oppress the liberty of their country. The peasants who, at a moment of imperious suggestion, produced over the feudal estates the anarchy of 1789, now having become soldiers, or small proprietors, or small farmers, and having remained for a moment the advance sentinels of the revolution, fell back into the silent and stolid calm of their traditional life, which, without risks and without movements, served as a sure basis for the so-called social order. The petty bourgeois of the cities, and the former members of the guilds rapidly developed, in the camp of economic struggle, into free traffickers in manual labor. The freedom of trade required that every product become easily merchantable, and thus it

triumphed over the last obstacle, by enforcing the demand that labor also become for it a free commodity.

All changed at this moment. The state, which for centuries so many million deluded ones had regarded as a sacred institution or a divine mandate, allowed its sovereign to be beheaded by the prosaic means of a technical machine, and thereby lost its sacred character. The state, also, was becoming a technical appliance, which substituted bureauocracy for hierarchy. And as the ancient titles no longer assured their possessors the privilege of exercising diverse functions, this new state could become the prey of all those who wished to seize upon it; it found itself, in a word, put up at auction, with the provision that the successful aspirants must be the solid guarantors of the property of the new and the old proprietors. The new state, which had need of its Eighteenth Brumaire to become an orderly bureaucracy, supported upon victorious militarism, this state which completed the revolution in the act which denied it, could not dispense with its scripture, and it found it in the Civil Code, which is the golden book for a society which produces and sells commodities. It is not in vain that generalized jurisprudence had preserved and annotated for centuries, in the form of a scientific discipline, this Roman law, which was, which is and ever shall be, the typical and classical form of the law of every shopkeeping society, until communism puts an end to the possibility of buying and selling.

The bourgeoisie, which, by the concurrence of so many singular circumstances effected the revolution with the concurrence of so many other classes and semi-classes which after a short lapse of time almost all disappeared from the political stage, seemed, in the moments of the most violent shocks, as if moved by motives inspired by an ideology, which would have absolutely no relation with the effects which actually supervene and perpetuated themselves. The meaning of that is that in the heat of struggle the bewildering change of the economic substructure appeared, as if it were, disguised by ideals and obscure by the interlacings of so many intentions and designs, whence sprung so many acts of cruelty and of unparalleled heroism, so many currents of illusion and hard facts of disenchantment. Never had so powerful a faith in the ideal of progress sprung from human breasts. To deliver the human race from superstitution, and even from religion, to make of each individual a citizen, or of every private man a public man; those are its beginnings:—and then on the line of this programme to sum up, in the short activity of a few years, an evolution which appears to the most idealistic of today as the work of several centuries to come—that is the idealism of that time! And why should it revolt at the pedagogy of the guillotine?

That poetry, grand certainly, if not joyous, left behind it a prose that was severe enough. And it was the prose of the proprietors who owned their property to chance, it was that of the high

finance and the newly rich purveyors, marshals, prefects, journalists and mercenary men of letters; it was the prose of the court of that strange man to whom the qualities of military genious grafted upon the soul of a brigand, had, without any doubt, conferred the right of treating as an ideologist whoever did not admire the bare fact which, in life, as it was with him, can be nothing else than the simple brutality of success.

The French Revolution hastened the course of history in a large part of Europe. To it attaches, on the Continent, all that we call liberalism and modern democracy, except in the case of the false imitation of England, and up to the establishment of Italian unity, which was and will remain perhaps the last act of the revolutionary bourgeoisie. This revolution was the most vivid and most instructive example of the fashion in which a society transforms itself and how new economic conditions develop, and in developing co-ordinate the members of society into groups and classes. It was the palpable proof of the fashion in which law is found, when it is necessary for the expression and the defense of definite relations, and how the state is created, and how disposal is made of its means, its forces and its organs. Here is seen how ideas arise from the fields of social institutions, and how characters, tendencies, sentiments, volitions, that is to say, in a word, moral forces, are produced and develop into conditions governed by circumstances. In a word, the data of social science were, so to speak, prepared by society

itself, and it is no wonder if the revolution, which was preceded ideologically by the most acute form of rationalistic doctrinairism ever known, ended finally by leaving behind it the intellectual need of an anti-doctrinaire historical and sociological science, like that which our own century has attempted to construct.

And here, both by what we have seen and by what is known generally, it is useless to recall anew, how Owen forms one of the same group with Saint Simon and Fourier, and to repeat through what ways scientific socialism took its birth. The important thing is in these two points; that historical materialism could not arise but from the theoretical consciousness of socialism; and that it can henceforth explain its own origin with its own principles, which is the greatest proof of its maturity.

Thus I have justified the phrase at the beginning of this chapter: ideas do not descend from heaven.

VIII.

The road traversed thus far has enabled us to take exact account of the precise and relative value of the so-called doctrine of factors; we know also how its adherents come to eliminate objectively those provisional concepts, which were and are a simple expression of a thought not fully arrived at maturity.

And, nevertheless, it is necessary that we speak further of this doctrine, in order to explain better

and more in detail for what reasons two of the so-called factors, the state and the law, have been and are still considered as the principal and exclusive subject of history.

Historians have indeed for centuries placed in these forms of social life the essence of development. Moreover, they have perceived this development only in the modification of these forms. History has for centuries been treated as a discipline relative to the juridico-political movement and even to the political movement principally. The substitution of society for politics is a recent thing, and much more recent still is the reduction of society to the elements of historical materialism. In other words, sociology is of quite recent invention, and the reader, I hope, will have understood for himself that I employ this term for the sake of brevity, to indicate in a general manner the science of social functions and variations, and that I do not hold to the specific sense given it by the Positivists.

It is more satisfactory to say that, up to the beginning of this century, the data bearing upon usages, customs, beliefs, etc., or even upon the *natural conditions*, which serve as the foundation and connection for social forms, were not mentioned in political histories unless as objects of simple curiosity, or as accessories and complements of the narration.

All this cannot be a simple accident, and indeed is not. There is, then, a double interest in taking account of the tardy appearance of social history, both

because our doctrine justifies yet again by this means its reason for existence, and because we thus eliminate, in a definite manner, the so-called factors.

If we make an exception of certain critical moments in which social classes, by an extreme incapacity for adapting themselves to a condition of relative equilibrium, enter into a crisis of more or less prolonged anarchy, and if we make an exception of those catastrophes in which an entire world disappears, as at the fall of the Roman Empire of the West, or at the dissolution of the Califate, then it may be said that, ever since there has been a written history, the state appears not only as the creation of society but also as its support. The first step that child-like thought had made in this order of considerations is in this statement: That which governs is also that which creates.

If, moreover, we make an exception of certain short periods of democracy exercised with the vivid consciousness of popular sovereignty, as was the case in a few Greek cities, especially at Athens, and in a few Italian cities, and especially Florence (the former nevertheless were composed of free men who were proprietors of slaves, and the latter of privileged citizens who exploited foreigners and peasants) the society organized into a state was always composed of a majority at the mercy of the minority. And thus the majority of men has appeared in history as a mass sustained, governed, guided, exploited and ill treated, or at least as a variegated conglomeration of interests, which a few had to govern, main-

taining in equilibrium the divergences, either by pressure or by compensation.

Thence the necessity of an art of government, and as it is this before all else which strikes those who are studying collective life, it was natural that politics should appear as the author of the social order and as the sign of the continuity in the succession of historic forms. To say politics is to say activity, which, up to a certain point, is exercised in a desired direction, until the moment at least when calculations dash themselves against unknown or unexpected obstacles. By taking the state as an imperfect experience would suggest for the author of society, and politics for the author of the social order, it resulted that the narrators or philosophical historians were driven to place the essence of history in a succession of forms, institutions and political ideas.

Whence the state drew its origin, where the basis of its performance was found, that mattered not, as that matters not in current reasoning. The problems of the genetic order arose, as is known, rather late. The state is and it finds its reason for existence in its present necessity; that is so true that the imagination has not been able to adapt itself to the idea that it has not always existed, and so it has prolonged its conjectural existence back to the first origins of the human race. The gods or demigods and heroes were its founders, in mythology at least, just as in mediæval theology the Pope is the first and therefore the divine and perpetual source of all authority. Even in our time, inexperienced travelers and imbecile missionaries find the state where there is, as among

savages and barbarians, nothing but the gens, or the tribe of gentes, or the alliance of gentes.

Two things were necessary that these prejudices of the judgment should be overcome. In the first place, it was necessary to recognize that the functions of the state arise, increase, diminish, alter and follow each other with the variations of certain social conditions. In the second place, it was necessary to arrive at a comprehension of the fact that the state exists and maintains itself in that it is organized for the defense of certain definite interests, of one part of society against all the rest of society itself, which must be made in such a way, in its entirety, that the resistance of the subjects, of the ill treated and the exploited, either is lost in multiple frictions, or is tempered by the partial advantages, wretched though they be, to the oppressed themselves. Politics, that art so miraculous and so admired, thus brings us back to a very simple formula; to apply a force or a system of forces to the total of resistances.

The first step, and the most difficult, is taken when the state has been reduced to the social conditions whence it draws its origin. But these social conditions themselves have been subsequently defined by the theory of classes, the genesis of which is in the manner of the different occupations, granted the distribution of labor, that is to say, granted the relations which co-ordinate and bind men together in a definite form of production.

Thenceforth the concept of the state has ceased to represent the direct cause of the historic movement as the presumed author of society, because it

has been seen that in each of its forms and its variations there is nothing else than the positive and forced organization of a definite class rule, or of a definite compact between different classes. And then by an ulterior consequence from these premises, it is finally to be recognized that politics, as the art of acting in a desired direction, is a comparatively small part of the general movement of history, and that it is but a feeble part of the formation and the development of the state itself, in which many things, that is to say, many relations, arise and develop by a necessary compact, by a tacit consent, or by violence endured and tolerated. The reign of the unconscious, if by that we mean what is not decreed by free choice and forethought, but what is determined and accomplished by a succession of habits, customs, compacts, etc., has become very considerable in the domain of the data which form the object of the historic sciences; and politics, which has been taken as an explanation, has itself become something to explain.

We know now in a positive way the reasons in consequence of which history had necessarily to appear under a purely political form.

But this does not mean that we ought to believe that the state is a simple excrescence, a mere accessory of the social body, or of free association, as so many Utopians and so many ultra-liberal thinkers of anarchist tendencies have imagined. If society has thus far culminated in the state, it is because it has had need of this complement of force and au-

thority, because it is at first composed of units which are unequal by reason of economic differentiations. The state is something very real, a system of forces which maintain equilibrium and impose it through violence and repression. And to exist as a system of forces it has been compelled to develop and to establish an economic power, whether this latter rests upon robbery, the result of war, or whether it consists in direct property in the domain, or whether it is constituted little by little, thanks to the modern method of public taxes, which takes on the constitutional appearance of a self-imposed system of taxation. It is in this economic power, so considerable in modern times, that its capacity for acting is founded. It results, that by reason of a new division of labor, the functions of state give rise to special orders and conditions, that is to say, to very particular classes, without including the class of parasites.

The state, which is and which must be an economic power that in its defense of the ruling classes it may be furnished with means to repress, to govern, to administer and to make war, creates in a direct or an indirect manner an aggregation of new and particular interests, which necessarily react upon society. Thus the state, by the fact that it has arisen and that it maintains itself as a guaranty of the social antitheses, which are a consequence of economic differentiations, creates around itself a circle of persons interested directly in its existence.

Two consequences follow therefrom. As society is not a homogeneous whole, but a body of specialized

articulations, or, rather, a multiform complexus of objects and interests, it happens that sometimes the directors of the state seek to isolate themselves, and by this isolation they oppose themselves to the whole of society, and then, in the second place, it happens that organs and functions, created first for the advantage of all, end by no longer serving any interest but those of groups, and permit abuses of power on the part of coteries and camorras. Thence arise aristocracies and hierarchies born from the use of the public power, thence arise dynasties; in the light of simple logic these formations appear wholly irrational.

From the first beginnings of written history the state has increased or diminished its powers, but it has never disappeared, because ever since there have been, in the society of men unequal in consequence of economic differentiation, reasons for maintaining and for defending, through force or conquest, slavery, monopolies, or the predominance of one form of production, with the domination of man over man. The state has become, as it were, the field of an endless civil war, which is developing always, even if it does not always show itself under the startling form of Marius and Sylla, days of June and wars of Secession. Within the state, the corruption of man by man has always flourished, because, if there is no form of domination which does not meet resistance, there are no forms of resistance which, in consequence of the pressing needs of life, may not degenerate into a passive compact.

For these reasons, historic events, seen on the surface of the ordinary monotonous narrative, appear like the repetition of the same type, with few variations, like a series of kaleidoscopic pictures. We need not be astonished if the idealistic Herbart and the caustic or pessimistic Schopenhauer arrived at this conclusion, that there is no history, in the sense of any actual *processus*, which is to say in common language; history is a tiresome song.

When political history is once reduced to its quintessence, the state remains illuminated in all its prose. Thenceforth there is no more trace either of theological divination, nor of metaphysical transubstantiation, so much in vogue among certain German philosophers,—for whom the state is the Idea, the State Idea which is realized in history, the state is the full realization of the personality, and other stupidities of the same sort. The state is a real organization of defense to guarantee and perpetuate a mode of association, the foundation of which is a form of economic production, or a compact and a transaction between forms. To sum up, the state assumes either a system of property, or a compact between several systems of property. There is the foundation of all its art, the exercise of which demands that the state itself became an economic power, and that it also dispose of means and processes to make property pass from the hands of some into the hands of others. When, by the effect of an acute and violent change of the forms of production, it is necessary to resort to an unusual and extraordinary read-

justment of the relations of property (for example, the abolition of mortmain and fiefs, the abolition of commercial monopolies), then the old political form is insufficient and revolution is necessary to create a new organ which may operate the new economic transformation.

If we make an exception of the very ancient times which are unknown to us, all history is developed in the contacts and the antagonisms of the different tribes and communities, and thereafter of the different nations and different states; that is to say, that the reasons for the internal antitheses in the circle of each society are always more and more complicated with frictions with the outside world. These two reasons for antagonism condition each other reciprocally, but in ways which are always varying. Often it is internal disturbance which urges a community or a city to enter into external collisions; at other times it is these collisions which alter the internal relations.

The principal motive for the different relations between the different communities has been from the beginnings, even as it is to-day, *commerce* in the broad sense of the word, that is to say, exchange, whether it is a matter of giving up, as in the poor tribes, merely the surplus in exchange for other things, or whether it is a matter, as to-day, of production on a large scale, which is carried on with the exclusive intention of selling so as to draw from a sum of money a larger sum of money. This enor-

mous mass of events exterior and interior, which accumulate and pile upon each other in history, is such a trouble to the historians who content themselves with exploring it and summarizing it, that they become lost in the infinite attempts at chronological groups and bird's-eye views. Whoever, on the contrary, knows the internal development of the different social types in their economic structure, and who considers political events as the particular results of the forces acting in society, ends by triumphing over the confusion born out of the multiplicity and the uncertainty of first impressions, and instead of a chronological or synchronous series, or a view of the whole, he can arrive at the concrete series of a real *processus*.

In the presence of these realistic conditions all the ideologies founded on the ethical mission of the state or on any such conception, fall to the ground. The state is, so to speak, fitted into its place, and it remains encased, as it were, in the surroundings of the social development, in its capacity of a form resulting from other conditions, and in its turn, by reason of its existence, reacting naturally upon the rest.

Here arises another question.

Will this form ever be outgrown?—or can there be a society without a state?—or can there be a society without classes?—and if we must be more explicit, will there ever be a form of communist production with a distribution of labor and of tasks such that there will be no room in it for the development of

inequalities, that source of domination of man over man?

It is in the affirmative answer to this question that *scientific socialism* consists, in so far as it affirms the coming of communistic production, not as a postulate, nor as the aim of a free volition, but as the result of the *processus* immanent in history.

As is well known, the premise of this prevision is in the actual conditions of present capitalist production. This, socializing continually the mode of production, has subjected living labor more and more with its regulations to the objective conditions of the technical process, it has day after day concentrated the property in the means of production more and ever more into the hands of a few, who as stockholders, or speculators, are always found to be more and more removed from immediate labor, the direction of which passes over to intelligence and science. With the increased consciousness of this situation among the proletarians, whose instruction in solidarity comes from the actual conditions of their employment, and with the decrease of the capacity of the holders of capital to preserve the private direction of productive labor, a moment will come, when in one fashion or another, with the elimination in every form of private rent, interest, profit, the production will pass over to the collectivist association, that is to say, will become communistic. Thus will disappear all inequalities, except those of sex, age, temperament and capacity, that is to say, all those inequalities will cease which engender economic

classes, or which are engendered by them, and the disappearance of classes will put an end to the possibility of the state, as domination of man over man. The technical and pedagogical government of intelligence will form the only organization of society.

In this fashion, scientific socialism, in an ideal fashion at least, has triumphed over the state; and its triumph has given it a complete knowledge both of its mode of origin and the reasons for its natural disappearance. It has understood it precisely because it does not rise up against it in a one-sided and subjective fashion, as did more than once, at different epochs, the cynics, the stoics, the epicureans of all sorts, the religious sectaries, the visionary monks, the utopians and finally, in our days, the anarchists of every stripe. Still more, instead of rising up against it, scientific socialism is proposing to show how the state continually rises up of itself against itself, by creating in the means with which it cannot dispense, as, for example, a colossal system of taxation, militarism, universal suffrage, the development of education, etc., the conditions of its own ruin. The society which has produced it will reabsorb it; that is to say, that just as society in organizing a new form of production will eliminate the antagonisms between capital and labor, so, with the disappearance of proletarians and the conditions which render proletarians possible, will disappear all dependence of men upon his fellow man in any form of hierarchy, whatever it may be.

The terms in which the genesis and the develop-

ment of the state evolve, from its initial point of appearance in a particular community, where economic differentiation is beginning, up to the moment where this disappearance begins to foreshadow itself, make it henceforth intelligible to us.

The State has been reduced till it is but a necessary complement of certain definite economic forms, and thus the theory which would have seen in it an independent factor in history is thenceforth forever eliminated.

It is henceforth relatively easy to take account of the fashion in which *law* has been raised up to the rank of a decisive factor of society, and thus of history, directly or indirectly.

Before all else, we must remember in what fashion arose this philosophic conception of justice generalized, which is the principal foundation of the theory which maintains that history is dominated by the progress of independent legislation.

With the precocious dissolution of the feudal society in certain parts of Central and Northern Italy, and with the birth of the Communes, which were republics of production grouped in trade guilds and merchant guilds, the Roman law was forced into a place of honor. This law flowered anew in the Universities. It entered into a struggle with the barbaric laws and also in part with the canon law; it was then evidently a form of thought

which answered better to the needs of the bourgeoisie, which was beginning to develop.

In fact, considering the peculiarities of rival laws, which were either customs of barbarous nations, or corporation privileges, or papal or imperial concessions, this law appeared as the universality of *written reason.* Had it not arrived at the point of regarding human personality in its most abstract and human relations, since a certain Titius is capable of becoming debtor and creditor, of selling and buying, of making a cession, a donation, etc.? Roman law, although elaborated in its last editing at the command of emperors by servile parasites, appeared then, amid the decline of mediæval institutions, as a revolutionary force, and as such it constituted a great step of progress. This law, so universal that it gave the means of overthrowing barbaric laws, was certainly a law which corresponded to human nature considered under its generic relations; and by its opposition to private laws and privileges it appeared as a natural law.

We know, moreover, how this ideology of natural law arose. It acquired its greatest distinction in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; but it had long been prepared for by the jurisprudence which took for its base the Roman law, whether it adopted it, revised it, or corrected it.

To the formation of the ideology of natural law another element contributed, the Greek philosophy of later epochs. The Greeks, who were the inventors of those definite arts of the mind which are sciences,

never, as is known, drew from their multiple local laws a discipline corresponding to that which we call the science of law. On the contrary, by the rapid progress of abstract research in the circle of their democracies, they arrived very soon at a logical, rhetorical and pedagogical discussion on the nature of justice, the state, the law, penalty; and in their philosophy we may trace the rudimentary forms of all later discussions. But it is not until later, that is to say, in the Hellenistic epoch, when the limits of Greek life were sufficiently enlarged to be mingled with those of the civilized world, that, in the cosmopolitan environment which carried with it the need of searching in each man for the generic man, the rationalism of justice arose—of justice or of natural right in the form given it by the stoic philosophy. The Greek rationalism which had already furnished a certain formal element to the logical codification of Roman law reappeared in the eighteenth century in the doctrine of natural right.

That ideology, whose criticism has served as an arm and an instrument for giving a juridical form to the economic organization of modern society, has had, consequently, various sources. Yet, in fact, this juridical ideology reflects, in the struggle for law and against law, the revolutionary period of the bourgeois spirit. And, although it takes its doctrinal point of departure in a return to the traditions of the ancient philosophy, in the generalization of Roman jurisprudence, in everything else, and in all its development, it is completely new and modern.

Roman law, although it was generalized by scholasticism and by modern elaboration, still remains within itself a collection of special cases which have not been deduced according to a preconceived system, nor preordained by the systematic mind of the legislator. On the other hand, the rationalism of the stoics, their contemporaries and their disciples, was a work of pure contemplation, and it produced no revolutionary movement around it. The ideology of natural law, which finally took the name of philosophy of law, was, on the contrary, systematic, it started always from general formulae, it was aggressive and polemic, and still more, it was at war with orthodoxy, with intolerance, with privilege, with constituted bodies; in fine, it fought for the liberties which to-day constitute the formal conditions of modern society. It is with this ideology, which was a method of struggle, that arose for the first time, in a typical and decisive form, that idea that there is a law which is one and the same with reason. The laws against which the struggle was carried on appear as deviations, backward steps, errors.

From this faith in rational law arose the blind belief in the power of the legislator, which grew into fanaticism at the critical moments of the French Revolution.

Thence the belief that society as a whole is to be submitted to one single law, equal for all, systematic, logical, consistent. Thence the conviction that a law guaranteeing to all a legal equality, that is to say,

the privilege of contracting, guaranteed also liberty to all.

The triumph of true law assures the triumph of reason, and the society which is regulated by a law equal for all is a perfect society!

It is useless to say that there were illusions at the bottom of these tendencies. We all know to what this universal liberation of men was to lead. But what is most important here is the fact that these persuasions arose from a conception of law, which considered it as detached from the social causes which produced it. Likewise that reason, to which these ideologies appealed, reduced itself to relieving labor, association, traffic, commerce, political forms and conscience from all limits and all obstacles which prevented free competition. I have already shown in another chapter how the great Revolution of the eighteenth century may serve us for experience. And if there is still some one to-day who insists on speaking of a rational law which dominates history, of a law, in short, which would be a *factor,* instead of being a simple *fact* in historic revolution, that means that he is living out of our time and that he has not understood that our liberal and equalitarian codification has already, in fact, marked the end and the term of that whole school of natural law.

By different ways we have arrived in this century at reducing law, considered previously as a rational thing, into a material thing, and thus into a thing corresponding to definite social conditions.

In the first place, the interest in history gained in

extent and in depth, and it led students to recognize that to understand the origins of law, it was not sufficient to stop at the data of pure reason, nor at the study of Roman law alone. Barbaric laws, the usages and customs of nations and societies, so despised by the rationalists, have been theoretically restored to honor. That was the only way to arrive, through the study of the most ancient forms, at an understanding of how the most recent forms could have been successively produced.

Codified Roman law is a very modern form; that personality, which it assumes as a universal subject, is an elaboration of a very advanced epoch, in which the cosmopolitanism of social relations was dominated by a military-bureaucratic constitution. In this environment, in which a written code of reason had been built up, there was no longer any trace of spontaneity or popular life, there was no more democracy. This same law, before arriving at this crystallization, had arisen and had developed; and if we study it in its origins and in its developments, and especially if, in this study, we employ the comparative method, we recognize that, upon many points, it is analogous to the institutions of inferior societies and nations. It therefore becomes evident that the true science of law can be nothing less than the genetic history of the law itself.

But, while the European continent had created in the codification of civil law the type and the textbook of practical bourgeois judgment, was there not in England another self-originating form of law,

which arose and developed in a purely practical manner, from the very conditions of the society which produced it without system, and without the action of methodical rationalism having any part in it? The law, which actually exists and is applied, is therefore a much simpler and much more modest thing than was imagined by the enthusiasts who sing the praises of written judgment, of the empire of reason. For their defense, it must not be forgotten that they were the ideal precursors of the great Revolution. For ideology it was necessary to substitute the history of legal institutions. The philosophy of law ended with Hegel; and if objectors mention the books published since, I reply that the works published by professors are not always the index of the progress of thought. The philosophy of law thus became the philosophical study of the history of law. And it is not necessary to repeat here again how historic philosophy ended in economic materialism and in what sense critical communism is the reversal of Hegel.

This revolution, apparently a revolution in ideas alone, is merely an intellectual reflection of the revolutions which have been produced in practical life.

In our century, legislating has become an epidemic; and reason enthroned in legal ideology has been dethroned by parliaments. In these the antitheses of class interests have taken on the form of parties; and the parties struggle for or against defi-

nite laws; and all law appears as a simple fact, or as a thing which it is useful or not useful to do.

The proletariat has arisen; and wherever the struggle of the laborers has taken definite form, the bourgeois codes have been convicted of falsehood. Written judgment has shown itself powerless to save the wage-workers from the oscillations of the market, to guarantee women and children against the oppressive hours of the factories, or to find an expedient to solve the problem of forced idleness. The partial limitation of the hours of labor has, itself alone, been the subject and the occasion of a gigantic struggle. The small and the large bourgeoisie, agrarians and manufacturers, advocates of the poor and defenders of accumulated wealth, monarchists and democrats, socialists and reactionaries, have bitterly contended over extracting profit from the action of the public authorities and over exploiting the contingencies of politics and parliamentary intrigue, to find the guaranty and the defense of certain definite interests in the interpretation of existing law, or in the creation of a new law. This new legislation has more than once been revised, and the strangest oscillations may be observed in it; extending from the humanitarianism which defends the poor and even animals, to the promulgation of martial law. Justice has been stripped of its mask and has become merely a profane thing.

The consciousness of experience has come to us and has given us a formula as precise as it is modest; every rule of law has been and is the customary,

authoritative, or judicial defense of a definite interest; the reduction of law to economics is then almost immediately accomplished.

If the materialistic conception finally came to furnish to these tendencies an explicit and systematic view, it is because its orientation has been determined by the visual angle of the proletariat. This last is the necessary product and the indispensable condition of a society in which all the persons are, from an abstract point of view, equal before the law, but where the material conditions of development and the liberties of each are unequal. The proletarians are the forces through which the accumulated means of production reproduce themselves and reconstitute themselves into new wealth; but they themselves live only by enrolling themselves under the authority of capital; and from one day to the next they find themselves out of work, impoverished and exiles. They are the army of social labor, but their chiefs are their masters. They are the negation of justice in the empire of law, that is to say, that they are the irrational element in the pretended domain of reason.

History then has not been a *processus* for arriving at the empire of reason in law; it has thus far been nothing else than a series of changes in the form of subjection and servitude. History then consists entirely in the struggle of interests, and law is but the authoritative expression of the interests which have triumphed.

These formulæ indeed do not permit us to ex-

plain, by the immediate examination of the various interests which are at its base, every particular law which has appeared in history. The facts of history are very complicated; but these general formulæ suffice to indicate the style and the method of research which has been substituted for legal ideology.

IX.

Here I must give certain formulæ.

Granted the conditions of the development of labor and the instruments appropriated to it, the economic structure of society, that is to say, the form of production of the immediate means of life, determines, on an artificial field, *in the first place and directly*, all the rest of the practical activity of those associated, and the variation of this activity in the *processus* which we call history, that is to say:—the formation, the frictions, the struggles and the erosions of the classes;—the corresponding regulations relative to law and morality;—and the reasons and modes of subordination and subjection of men toward men and the corresponding exercise of dominion and authority, in fine, that which gives birth to the State and that which constitutes it. It determines, *in the second place*, the tendency and in great part, *in an indirect fashion*, the objects of imagination and of thought in the production of art, religion and science.

The products of the *first* and of the *second stage*, in consequence of the interests which they create,

the habits which they engender, the persons whom they group and whose spirit and inclinations they specify, tend to fix themselves and isolate themselves as independent entities; and thence comes that empirical view, according to which different independent factors, having an efficacy and a rhythmic movement of their own, contribute to form the historic *processus* and the social configurations which successively result from it. It is the social classes, in so far as they consist in differentiations of interests, which unfold in definite ways and in forms of opposition (—whence come the friction, the movement, the process and the progress—), which have been the factors—if it was ever necessary to employ this expression—the real, proper and positive factors of history, from the disappearance of primitive communism until to-day.

The variations of the underlying (economic) structure of society which, at first sight, show themselves intuitively in the agitation of the passions, develop consciously in the struggles against law and for law, and become realized in the shaking and in the ruin of a definite political organization, have in reality their adequate expression only in the change in the relations which exist between the different social classes. And these relations change with the change of the relations which previously existed between the productivity of labor and the (legal-political) conditions of co-ordination of those who co-operate in production.

And finally, these connections between the pro-

ductivity of labor and the co-ordination of those who co-operate in it are changed with the changing of the instruments—in the broad sense of the word—necessary to production. The *processus* and the progress of technique, as they are the index, are also the condition of all the other *processus* and of all progress.

Society is for us a fact, which we cannot solve, unless it be by that analysis which reduces the complex forms to the simpler forms, the modern forms to the older forms: but that is to remain always, nevertheless, in a society which exists. History is but the history of society—that is to say, the history of the variations of human co-operation, from the primitive horde down to the modern State, from the immediate struggle against nature, by the means of a few very simple tools, down to the present economic structure, which reduces itself to these two poles; accumulated labor (capital) and living labor (proletarians). To resolve the social *complexus* into simple individuals, and to reconstruct it afterwards by the acts of free and voluntary thought; to construct, in fine, society with its reasons, is to misunderstand the objective nature and the immanence of the historic *processus*.

Revolutions, in the broadest sense of the word, and in the specific sense of the destruction of a political organization, mark the real and proper dates of historic epochs. Seen from afar, in their elements, in their preparation and their effects, at long range, they may appear to us as moments of

a constant evolution, with minute variations; but considered in themselves, they are definite and precise catastrophes, and it is only as catastrophes that they are historic events.

X.

Ethics, art, religion, science, are they then but products of economic conditions?—expositions of the categories of these very conditions?—effluvia, ornaments, emanations and mirages of material interests?

Affirmations of this sort, announced with this nudity and crudity, have already for some time passed from mouth to mouth, and they are a convenient assistance to the adversaries of materialism, who use them as a bugbear. The slothful, whose number is great even among the intellectuals, willingly fit themselves to this clumsy acceptance of such declarations. What a delight for all careless persons to possess, once for all, summed up in a few propositions, the whole of knowledge, and to be able with one single key to penetrate all the secrets of life! All the problems of ethics, æsthetics, philology, critical history and philosophy reduced to one single problem and freed thus from all difficulties!

In this way the simpletons might reduce the whole of history to commercial arithmetic; and finally a new and authentic interpretation of Dante might give us the Divine Comedy illustrated with the

process of manufacturing pieces of cloth which the wily Florentine merchants sold for their greater profit!

The truth is that the declarations which involve problems are converted very easily into vulgar paradoxes in the heads of those who are not accustomed to triumph over the difficulties of thought by the methodical use of appropriate means. I shall speak here, in general terms, of these problems, but, as it were, by aphorisms; and certainly I do not propose to write an encyclopedia in this short essay.

And first of all, ethics.

I do not mean systems and catechisms, religious or philosophic. Both of these have been and are above the ordinary and profane course of human events in most cases, as Utopias are above things. Neither do I speak of those formal analyses of ethical relations, which have been elaborated from the Sophists down to Herbart. This is science and not life. And it is formal science, like logic, geometry and grammar. The one who latest and with so much profundity defined these ethical relations (Herbart), knew well that ideas, that is to say, the formal points of view of the moral judgment, are in themselves powerless. Therefore he put into the circumstances of life and into the pedagogic formation of character the reality of ethics. He might have been taken for Owen if he had not been a retrograde.

I am speaking of that ethics which exists pro-

saically and in an empirical and current fashion, in the inclinations, the habits, the customs, the counsels, the judgments and the appreciations of ordinary mortals. I am speaking of that ethics which as suggestion, as impulse and as bridle, appears in different degrees of development, and more or less unmistakably, although in a fragmentary fashion, among all men; by the very fact of association because each occupies a definite position in the association, they naturally and necessarily reflect upon their own works and the works of others, and they conceive obligations and appreciations and all the first elements of general precepts.

There is the *factum;* and what is most important is that this *factum* appears to us varied and multiple in the different conditions of life, and variable through history. This *factum* is the *datum* of research. Facts are neither true nor false, as Aristotle already knew. Systems, on the contrary, theologic or rational, may be true or false because they aim to comprehend, explain and complete the fact, by bringing that fact to another fact, or integrating it with another.

Some points of preliminary theory are henceforth settled, in all that concerns the interpretation of this *factum.*

The will does not choose of itself, as was supposed by the inventors of *free will,* that product of the impotency of the psychological analysis not yet arrived at maturity. Volitions, in so far as they are facts of consciousness, are particular expres-

sions of the psychic mechanism. They are a result, first of necessities, and then, of all that precedes them up to the very elementary organic impulse.

Ethics does not place itself nor does it engender itself. There is no such universal foundation of the ethical relations varied and variable, as that spiritual entity which has been called the *moral conscience,* one and unique for all men. This abstract entity has been eliminated by criticism like all other such entities, that is to say, like all the faculties of the soul. What a beautiful explanation of the fact, in truth, to assume the generalization of the fact itself as a means of explanation. People reasoned thus: the sensations, the perceptions, the intuitions at a certain moment are found imagined, that is to say, changed in their form, therefore the imagination has transformed them. To this class of inventions belongs the *moral conscience,* which was accepted as a postulate of the ethical estimates, which are always conditioned. The moral conscience which really exists is an empirical fact; it is an index or a summary of the relative ethical formation of each individual. If there can be in it material for science, this cannot explain the ethical relations by means of the conscience, but the very thing it needs is to understand how that conscience is formed.

If volitions are derived, and if morality results from the conditions of life, ethics, in its completeness, is but a formation; its problem is altogether pedagogic.

There is a pedagogy which I will call individualistic and subjective, which, granted the generic conditions of human perfectibility, constructs abstract rules by which men, who are still in a period of formation, may be led to be strong, courageous, truthful, just, benevolent, and so on through the entire extent of the cardinal or secondary virtues. But again, can subjective pedagogy construct of itself a social background upon which all these beautiful things ought to be realized? If it constructs it, it simply elaborates a Utopia.

And, in truth, the human race, in the rigid course of its development, never had time nor occasion to go to the school of Plato or of Owen, of Pestalozzi or Herbart. It has done as it has been forced to do. Considered in an abstract manner, all men can be educated and all are perfectible; as a matter of fact, they have always been perfected and instructed as much as and in the measure that they could, granted the conditions of life in which they were obliged to develop. It is here precisely that the word environment is not a metaphor, and that the use of the word compact is not metaphorical. Real morality always presents itself as something conditioned and limited, which the imagination has sought to outgrow, by constructing Utopias, and by creating a supernatural pedagogue, or a miraculous redemption.

Why should the slave have had the ways of seeing and the passions and the sentiments of the master whom he feared? How could the peasant

relieve himself of his invincible superstitions, to which he was condemned by his immediate dependence upon nature and his mediate dependence upon a social mechanism unknown to him, and by his blind faith in the priest, who stands to him as a magician and sorcerer. In what fashion could the modern proletarian of the great industrial cities, exposed continuously to the alternatives of misery or subjection, how could he realize that way of living, regulated and monotonous, which was the one suited to the members of the trade guilds, whose existence seemed imbedded in a providential plan? From what intuitive elements of experience could the hog merchant of Chicago, who furnishes Europe with so many products at a cheap rate, extract the conditions of serenity and intellectual elevation which gave to the Athenian the qualities of the noble and good man, and to the Roman citizen, the dignity of heroism? What power of docile Christian persuasion will extract from the souls of the modern proletarians their natural reasons of hate against their determined or undetermined oppressors? If they wish that justice be done, they must appeal to violence; and before the love of one's neighbor as a universal law can appear possible to them, they must imagine a life very different from the present life, which makes a necessity of hatred. In this society of differentiations, hatred, pride, hypocrisy, falsehood, baseness, injustice and all the catechism of the cardinal vices and their

accessories make a sad appendage to the morality, equal for all, upon which they constitute the satire.

Ethics then reduces itself for us to the historical study of the subjective and objective conditions of how morality develops or meets obstacles to its development. In this only, that is to say, within these limits, we can recognize some value in the affirmation that morality corresponds to the social situations, and, *in the last analysis,* to the economic conditions. Only an idiot could believe that the individual morality of each one is proportionate to his individual economic situation. That is not only empirically false, but intrinsically irrational. Granted the natural elasticity of the psychic mechanism, and also the fact that no one lives so shut up in his own class that he does not undergo the influence of other classes, of the common environment and of the interlacing traditions, it is never possible to reduce the development of each individual to the abstract and generic type of his class and his social status. We are dealing there with the phenomena of the mass, of those phenomena which form, or should form, the objects of *moral statistics:* the discipline which has thus far remained incomplete, because it has taken for the objects of its combinations groups which it creates of itself by the addition of numbers of cases (for example, adulteries, thefts, homicides) and not the groups which, as classes, conditions, or situations exist really, that is to say, socially.

To recommend morality to men while assuming

or ignoring their conditions, this was hitherto the object and the class of argument of all the catechists. To recognize that these are given by the social environment, that is what the communists oppose to the utopia and the hypocrisy of the preachers of morality. And as they see in morality not a privilege of the elect, nor a gift of nature, but a result of experience and education, they admit human perfectibility through reasons and arguments which are, in my opinion, more moral and more ideal than those which have been given by the ideologists.

In other words, man develops, or produces himself, not as an entity generically provided with certain attributes, which repeat themselves, or develop themselves, according to a rational rhythm, but he produces and develops himself as at once cause and effect, as author and consequence, of certain definite conditions, in which are engendered also definite currents of ideas, of opinions, of beliefs, of imaginations, of expectations, of maxims. Thence arise ideologies of every sort, as also the generalization of morality in catechisms, in canons and in systems. We must not be surprised if these ideologies, once arisen, are afterwards cultivated alone by themselves, if they finally appear, as it were, detached from the living field whence they took their birth, nor if they hold themselves above man as imperative rules and models.

The priests and the doctrinaires of every sort

have given themselves for centuries to this labor of abstraction, and have forced themselves to maintain the resulting illusions. Now that the positive sources of all ideologies have been found in the mechanism of life itself, we must explain realistically their mode of generation. And as that is true of all ideologies, it is true also and, in particular of those which consist in projecting ethical estimates beyond their natural and direct limits, making of them anticaptions of divine announcements or presuppositions of universal suggestions of conscience.

Therein lies the object of the special historic problems. We cannot always find the tie which unites certain ethical ideas to practical definite conditions. The concrete social psychology of past times often remains impenetrable to us. Often the commonest things remain for us unintelligible, for example, the animals considered as unclean, or the origin for the repugnance at marriage between persons of remote degrees of relationship. A prudent course of study leads us to conclude that the motives of many details will remain always concealed. Ignorance, superstition, singular illusions, symbolisms, these with many others are causes of that unconscious element, often found in customs, which now constitutes for us the unknown and the unknowable.

The principal cause of all difficulty is precisely in the tardy appearance of what we call reason, so that the traces of the proximate motives of ideas

have been lost or have remained enveloped in the ideas themselves.

On the subject of science we can be much more brief.

For a long time history has been made in an artless fashion. Granted and admitted that the different sciences have their statements in manuals and encyclopedias, it seemed sufficient to work out chronologically the appearance of the different formulas, resolving the total of the systematic summary into the elements which have successively served to compose it. The general presupposition was simple enough; underneath this chronology is the rational conception which develops and progresses.

This method, if so it could be called, had within itself a certain disadvantage; it permitted us at best to understand how, one stage of science being granted, another stage of science may be derived from it by reason, but it did not permit us to discern by what condition of facts men were driven to discover science for the first time, that is to say, to reduce considered experience into a new and definite form. The question was, then, to find why there is an actual history of science, to find the origin of the scientific necessity, and what unites in a genetic fashion that necessity to our necessities in the continuity of the social *processus*.

The great progress of modern technique, which really constitutes the intellectual substance of the

bourgeois epoch, has worked, among other miracles, this one also, of revealing to us for the first time the practical origin of the *scientific attitude.* (We can never forget the Florentine Academy, which produced this phrase, when Italy was in the twilight of its past grandeur and when modern society was in the dawn of the great industry.) Henceforth we are in a position to take up the guiding thread of what, by abstraction, is called the scientific spirit; and no one is any longer astonished at finding that everything in scientific discoveries has come about, as was the case in other primitive times, when the clumsy elementary geometry of the Egyptians arose from the necessity of measuring the fields exposed to the annual inundations of the Nile, and when the periodicity of these inundations suggested, in Egypt and in Babylon, the discovery of the rudiments of the astronomical movements.

It is certainly true that when science is once created and partially ripened, as had already happened in the Hellenic period, the work of abstraction, of deduction and of combination continues among scientists in such a way that it possibly obliterates the consciousness of the social causes of the first production of science itself. But if we examine in their main features the epochs of the development of science, and if we confront the periods which the ideologists would characterize as periods of progress and of retrogression of intelligence, we perceive clearly the social reason for the impulses, sometimes increasing, sometimes decreasing, toward

scientific activity. What need had the feudal society of Western Europe for this ancient science, which the Byzantines preserved, at least materially, while the Arabs, free agriculturists, industrious artisans, or skillful merchants, had succeeded in increasing it a little. What is the Renaissance, if not the joining of the initiatory movement of the bourgeoisie to the traditions of ancient learning, which had become usable? What is all the accelerated movement of scientific knowledge, since the seventeenth century, but the series of acts accomplished by intelligence, refined by experience, to assure human labor, in the forms of an improved technique, the dominion over natural forces and conditions? Thence arises the war against darkness, superstition, the Church, religion; thence arise naturalism, atheism, materialism; thence the installation of the domain of reason. The bourgeois epoch is the epoch of minds in full play. (Vico.) It is worth remembering that this government of the Directory, which was the prototype and the compendium of all liberal corruption, was the first to introduce in the University and at the Academy in a formal and solemn fashion the science of free inquiry with Lamark! This science, which the bourgeois epoch has, through its inherent conditions, stimulated and made to grow like a giant, is the only heritage of past centuries which communism accepts and adopts without reserve.

It would not be useful to stop here for the discussion of the so-called anthithesis between science

and philosophy. If we accept those fashions of philosophizing which are confounded with mysticism and theology, philosophy never means a science or doctrine separate from its appropriate and particular things, but it is simply a degree, a form, a stage of thought with relation to the things which enter into the domain of experience. Philosophy is, then, either a generic anticipation of the problems which science has still to elaborate specifically, or a summary and a conceptual elaboration of the results at which the sciences have already arrived. As for those who, that they may not appear behind the times, talk now of scientific philosophy, if we do not wish to stop over the humorous element that there is in that expression, it will suffice to say that they are simply foods.

I said some pages back, in my statement of formulas, that the economic structure determines in the second place the direction, and in great part and indirectly, the objects of imagination and of thought in the production of art, of religion and of science. To express this otherwise, or to go further, would be to put one's self voluntarily on the road toward the absurd.

Before all else, in this formula, we are opposing the fantastic opinion, that art, religion and science are subjective developments and historical developments of a pretended artistic, religious or scientific spirit, which would go on manifesting itself successively through its own rhythm of evolution, fa-

vored or retarded on this side or that by material conditions. By this formula, it is desired to assert, moreover, the necessary connection, through which every fact of art and of religion is the exponent, sentimental, fantastic and thus derived, of definite social conditions. If I say *in the second place,* it is to distinguish these products from the facts of legal-political order which are a true and proper projection of economic conditions. And if I say *in great part and indirectly the objects* of these activities, it is to indicate two things: that in artistic or religious production the mediation from the conditions to the products is very complicated, and again that men, while living in society, do not thereby cease to live alone by themselves in nature, and to receive from it occasion and material for curiosity and for imagination.

After all, this is all reduced to a more general formula; man does not make several histories at the same time, but all these alleged different histories (art, religion, etc.) make up one alone. And it is not possible to take account of that clearly except at the characteristic and significant moment of the production of new things, that is to say in the periods which I will call revolutionary. Later, the acceptance of the things that have been produced, and the traditional repetition of a definite type, obliterated the sense of the origins of things.

Try, if you will, to detach the ideology of the *fables,* which are at the foundation of the Homeric poems, from that moment of historic evolution

where we find the dawn of Aryan civilization in the basin of the Mediterranean, that is to say, from that phase of the higher barbarism in which arises, in Greece and elsewhere, the epic. Or try to imagine the birth and the development of Christianity elsewhere than in Roman cosmopolitanism, and otherwise than by the work of those proletarians, those slaves, those unfortunates, those desperate ones, who had need of the redemption of the Apocalypse and of the promise of the Kingdom of God. Find, if you will, the ground for supposing that in the beautiful environment of the Renaissance the romanticism should begin to appear, which scarcely appeared in the decadent Torquato Tasso; or that one might attribute to Richardson or to Diderot the novels of Balzac, in whom appears, as a contemporary of the first generation of socialism and sociology, the *psychology of classes.* Far back, farther, farther, at the first origins of the mythical conceptions, it is evident that Zeus did not assume the characters of father of gods and men until the power of the *patria potestas* was already established, and that series of *processus* began which culminated in the State. Zeus thus ceases to be what was at first the simple *divus* (brilliant) or the Thunderer. And it is to be observed that at an opposite point of historic evolution, a great number of thinkers of the past century reduced to a single abstract God, who is a simple regent of the world, all that variegated image of the unknown and transcendental type, developed in so great a

wealth of mythological, Christian or pagan creations. Man felt himself more at home in nature, thanks to experience, but felt himself better able to penetrate the gearing of society, the knowledge of which he possessed in part. The miraculous dissolved in his mind, to the point where materialism and criticism could afterwards eliminate that poor remnant of transcendentalism, without taking up war against the gods.

There is certainly a history of ideas; but this does not consist in the vicious circle of ideas that explain themselves. It lies in rising from things to the idea. There is a problem; still more, there is a multitude of problems, so varied, multiple, multiform and mingled are the projections which men have made of themselves and of their economic-social conditions, and thus of their hopes and their fears, of their desires and their deceptions, in their artistic and religious concepts. The method is found, but the particular execution is not easy. We must above all guard against the scholastic temptation of arriving by deduction at the products of historic activity which are displayed in art and in religion. We must hope that philosophers like Krug, who explained the pen with which he wrote by a process of dialectic deduction, have remained forever buried in the notes of Hegel's logic.

Here I must state certain difficulties.

Before attempting to reduce secondary products (for example, art and religion) to the social condi-

tions which they idealize, one must first acquire a long experience of specified social psychology, in which the transformation is realized. Therein consists the justification of that sum of relations, which is designated in another form of language, under the name of Egyptian *world,* Greek *consciousness, spirit* of the Renaissance, *dominant ideas, psychology of nations,* of society or of classes. When these relations are established, and men have become accustomed to certain conceptions and certain modes of belief or of imagination, the ideas transmitted by tradition tend to become crystallized. Thus they appear as a force which resists new formations; and as this resistance shows itself through the spoken word, through writing, through intolerance, through polemics, through persecution, so the struggle between the new and the old social conditions takes on the form of a struggle between ideas.

In the second place, through the centuries of history properly so-called, and as a consequence of the heredity of the pre-history of savagery and of the conditions of subjection and those of inferiority in which the majority of men were and are placed, resulted acquiescence in what is traditional, and the ancient tendencies are perpetuated as obstinate survivals.

In the third place, as I have said, men living socially, do not cease to live also in nature. They are not, of course, bound to nature as animals are, because they live on an artificial groundwork. Every one understands, moreover, that a house is not a

cave, that agriculture is not natural pasturage, and that pharmacy is not exorcism. But nature is always the immediate subsoil of the artificial groundwork, and it is the environment which contains us. The industrial arts have put between us social animals, and nature, certain intermediaries which modify, set aside or remove the natural influences; but it has not for all that destroyed the efficacy of these, and we continually feel their effects. And even as we are born men or women, as we die almost always in spite of ourselves, and as we are dominated by the instinct of generation, so we also bear in our temperament certain special conditions which education in the broad sense of the word, or social compact, can modify, it is true, within certain limits, but which they can never suppress. These conditions of temperament, repeated in infinite cases throughout the centuries, constitute what is called the race. For all these reasons, our dependence upon nature, although it has diminished since prehistoric times, continues in our social life, just as the food which the sight of nature affords to the curiosity and the imagination continues also in our social life. Now these effects of nature, and the sentiments immediate or mediate which result from it, although they have been perceived, since history began, only on the visual angle which is given us by the conditions of society, never fail to reflect themselves in the products of art and of religion, and that adds to the difficulties of a realistic and complete interpretation of both.

XI.

In employing this doctrine as a new principle of research, as a precise means of defining our position, and as a visual angle, will it really be possible finally to arrive at a new narrative history? It is not possible to make an affirmative answer in general to this generic demand. Because, in fact, if we assume that the critical communist, the sociologist of economic materialism, or as he is commonly called, the Marxist, has the necessary critical preparation, the habit of historical study, and also the gift required for an orderly and vivacious narration, there is no reason for affirming that he cannot write history, as heretofore the partisans of all other political schools have written it.

We have the example of Marx, and there is an argument from fact which admits of no reply. But he was the first and the principal author of the decisive concepts of this doctrine, reducing it at once into an instrument of political orientation, in his character of an incomparable publicist, during the revolutionary period of 1848 to 1850. And then he applied it with the greatest precision in that essay entitled Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, of which it may be said today, at a great distance, and after so many publications, if we except certain infinitesimal details and certain false forecasts, that it would be possible to make neither corrections nor important complements. I will not repeat, since

I am not writing a bibliography, the list of the different writings of Marx or Engels—of which we have so many attempts from the Peasants' War (1850) down to his posthumous writings on The Present Unity of Germany—which are an application of the doctrine, nor those of their successors and of the popularizers of scientific socialism. Even in the socialist press we may read, from time to time, valuable attempts at explanation of certain political events, in which is found, precisely by reason of historic materialism, a clearness of vision which would be sought in vain among the writers and the disputants who have not yet torn away the fantastic veils and ideological envelopes of history.

Here is not the place to take up the defense of an abstract thesis, as an advocate would do. It is evident, nevertheless, in all the histories which have been written up to the present time, that there is always at bottom, if not in the explicit intentions of the writers, certainly in their spirit, a tendency, a principle, a general view of life; and so this doctrine, which has enabled us to study the social structure in an objective manner, must finally direct with precision the researches of history, and must end in a narrative complete, transparent and integral.

Helps are not lacking.

Economics, which, as everyone sees it today, had its birth and development as the science of bourgeois production, after being puffed up with the illusion

of representing the absolute laws of all forms of production, has through the dear school of experience entered since, as everyone knows, upon a period of self-criticism. Just as this self-criticism gave birth, on one side, to critical communism, so on the other side it has given birth, through the labor of the calmest, the wisest and the most prudent of the academic tradition, to the *historical school of economic phenomena.* Thanks to this school, and through the effect of the application of the descriptive and comparative methods, we are henceforth in possession of a vast sum of knowledge on the different historical forms of *economics,* from the most complex facts and those best specified through essential differences of types, down to the special domain of a cloister or a trade guild of the Middle Ages. The same thing has taken place with *statistics,* which, by the indefinite combination of its sources, succeeds now in throwing light, with a sufficient approximation, upon the movement of population in past centuries.

These studies, certainly, are not made in the interest of our doctrine, and oftener than not they are made in a spirit hostile to socialism; something not observed, we may say in passing, by those foolish readers of printed papers who so often confuse *economic history, historical economics,* and *historical materialism.* But these studies, apart from the materials which they gather, are remarkable in that they witness the progress which is in course of making the *internal history* which, little by little, is

taking the place of the *external history* with which, for centuries, the men of letters and artists were occupied.

A good part of these materials that have been gathered must always be submitted to new corrections, as for that matter happens in every domain of empirical knowledge, which oscillates continually between what is held for certain and what is simply probable, and what must, later, be integrated or eliminated.

The deductions and the combinations of the historians of economics, or of those who relate history in general, availing themselves of the guiding thread of economic phenomena, are not always so plausible or so conclusive, that one does not feel the need of saying to them: All this must be taken back and worked over. But that which is undoubted is the fact that in this present time all writing of history tends to become a science, or, better, a social discipline; and when that movement, now uncertain and multiform, shall be accomplished, the efforts of the scholars and inquirers will lead inevitably to the acceptance of economic materialism. By this incidence of efforts and of scientific labors, which start from points so opposite, the materialistic conception of all history will end by penetrating men's minds as a definite conquest of thought; and this will finally take away from partisans and adversaries the attempt to speak *pro* and *con* as for partisan theses.

Apart from the direct helps just enumerated, our

doctrine has many indirect helps, so that it can profitably employ the results of many disciplines, in which by reason of the greater simplicity of the relations, it has been possible more easily to make the application of the genetic method. The typical case is furnished by glottology, and in a more special fashion by the study which has for its object the ancient languages.

The application of historical materialism is certainly, hitherto, very far from that evidence and that clearness of *processus* of analysis and of reconstruction. It would be consequently a vain attempt to try, at this moment, to write a summary of universal history, which should propose to develop all the varied forms of production in order to deduce from them afterwards all the rest of human activity, in a particular and circumstantial fashion. In the present state of knowledge, he who should try to give this *compendium* of a new *Kulturgeschichte* would do nothing but translate into economic phraseology the points of general orientation which, in other books, for example, in Hellwald, give it in Darwinian phraseology.

It is a long step from the acceptance of the principle to its complete and particular application to the whole of a vast province of facts, or to a great succession of phenomena.

So the application of our doctrine must be kept for a moment to the exposition and the study of definite parts of history. The modern forms are clear to all. The economic developments of the

bourgeoisie, the manifest knowledge of the different obstacles which it has had to overcome in the different countries, and, consequently, the development of the different revolutions, taking this word in its broadest sense, contribute to make our understanding of it easy. To our eyes the pre-history of the bourgeoisie, at the moment of the decline of the Middle Ages, is equally clear, and it would not be difficult to find, for example, in the development of the city of Florence, an attested series of developments, in which the economic and statistical movement finds a perfect correspondence in the political relations and a sufficient illustration in the contemporary development of intelligence already reduced into prose and stripped, in great part, of ideological illusions. Nor would it be impossible to reduce, now, under the definite visual angle of materialism, the whole of ancient Roman history. But for that, and particularly for the primitive period, there are no direct sources; they are, on the contrary, abundant in Greece, from popular tradition, the epic, and the authentic juridical inscriptions, down to the pragmatic studies of the historical social relations. At Rome, on the other hand, the struggles for political rights carry with them almost always the economic reasons upon which they rest. Thus, the decline of definite classes, the formation of new classes, the movement of conquest, the change of the laws and of the forms of political array, appear to us with perfect clearness. This Roman history is hard and prosaic; it was never clad with these

ideological complements which were suited to Greek life. The rigid prose of conquest, of planned colonization, of institutions and of the forms of law, conquered and devised for solving the problems arising from definite frictions and contrasts, makes all Roman history a chain of events which follow each other in a sequence which is grossly evident.

The true problem consists, indeed, not in substituting sociology for history, as if the latter had been an appearance which conceals behind it a secret reality, but in understanding history as a whole, in all its intuitive manifestations, and in understanding it through the aid of economic sociology. It is not a question of separating the accident from the substance, the appearance from the reality, the phenomenon from the intrinsic kernel, or applying any other formula used by the partisans of any species of scholasticism, but of explaining the connection and the *complexus* precisely in so far as it is a connection and a *complexus*. It is not merely a question of discovering and determining the social groundwork, and then of making men appear upon it like so many marionettes, whose threads are held and moved, no longer by Providence but by economic catagories. These catagories have themselves developed and are developing, like all the rest—because men change as to the capacity and the art of vanquishing, subduing, transforming and utilizing natural conditions; because men change in spirit and attitude through the reaction of their

tools upon themselves; because men change in their respective and co-associated relations; and therefore as individuals depending in various degrees upon one another. We have, in fine, to do with history, and not with its skeleton. We are dealing with narration and not with abstraction, with the explaining and treating of the whole, and not merely with resolving and analyzing it; we have to do, in a word, now, as always, with an art.

It may be that the sociologist who follows the principles of economic materialism proposes to keep himself simply to the analysis, for example, of what the classes were at the moment when the French Revolution broke out, and to pass then to the classes that result from the Revolution and survive it. In that case the titles, the indications and the classifications of the materials to analyze are definite; they are, for example, the city and the country, the artisan and the laborer, the nobles and the serfs, the land which is freed from feudal charges, and the small proprietors who came into being, commerce which frees itself from so many restrictions, money which accumulates, industry which prospers, etc. There is nothing to object to in the choice of this method, which, because it follows the track of embryonic origins, was indispensable to the preparation of historical research according to the direction of the new doctrine.*

* (I allude to the excellent work of Karl Kautsky, *Die Klassengensaetze von 1789.*)

But we know that the study of embryonic origins does not suffice to make us understand animal life, which is not a scheme, but is composed of living beings which struggle, and in their struggle employ forces, instincts and passions. And it is the same, *mutatis mutandis,* with men also, in so far as they live historically. These particular men, moved by certain passions, urged by certain circumstances, with such and such designs, such intentions, acting in such an attempt with such an illusion of their own, or with such a deception, of another, who, martyrs of themselves or of others, enter on harsh contests and reciprocal suppressions of each other—there is the real history of the French Revolution. If, however, it is true that all history is but the unfolding of definite economic conditions, it is equally true that it develops only in definite forms of human activity,—whether the latter be passionate or reflective, fortunate or unsuccessful, blindly instinctive or deliberately heroic.

To understand the interlacings and the *complexus* in its inner connection and its outer manifestations; to descend from the surface to the foundation, and then to return from the foundation to the surface; to analyze the passions and the intentions, in their motives, from the closest to the most remote, and then to bring back the data of the passions and of the intentions and of their causes to the most remote elements of a definite economic situation; there is the difficult art which the materialistic conception must realize.

And as we must not imitate that teacher who on the bank taught his pupils to swim by the definition of swimming, I beg the reader to await the examples which I shall give in other essays in a real historical narration, working over into a book which for some time I have already been doing in my teaching.

In this way certain secondary and derivative questions are once for all cleared up.

What, for example, is the meaning of the lives of the great men?

In these later times, answers have been given, which, in one sense or another, have an extreme character. On the one side, there are the extreme sociologists, on the other side the individualists who, after the fashion of Carlyle, put the heroes into the first rank of their history. According to some it is sufficient to show what were the reasons, for example, of Cæsarism, and Cæsar matters little. According to others, there are no objective reasons of classes and social interests which suffice to explain anything; it is the great minds which give the impulse to the whole historic movement; and history has, so to speak, its lords and its monarchs. The empiricists of narration extract themselves from embarrassment in a very simple fashion, putting together at hazard men and things, objective necessities of fact and subjective influences.

Historical materialism goes beyond the antithetical views of the sociologists and the individualists, and at the same time it eliminates the eclecticism of the empirical narrators.

First of all the *factum*.

Let this particular Cæsar, as Napoleon was, be born in such a year, let him follow such a career, and find himself ready for the Eighteenth Brumaire. All this is completely accidental with relation to the general course of things which was pushing the new class, mistress of the field, to save from the Revolution that which appeared to it necessary to save, and that necessitated the creation of a bureaucratico-military government. It was, however, necessary to find the man, or the men. But what actually happened came about in the fashion that we know. It depended on this fact, that it was Napoleon who directed the enterprise and not a pitiable Monk, or a ridiculous Boulanger. And from that moment the accident ceases to be accident, precisely because it is this definite person who gives his imprint and physiognomy to the events, determining the fashion or the manner in which they have unfolded.

The very fact that all history rests upon antitheses, contrasts, struggles and wars, explains the decisive influence of certain men in definite occasions. These men are neither a negligible accident of the social mechanism, nor miraculous creators of what society, without them, could have made in no other fashion. It is the very interlacings of the antithetic conditions, which causes the fact that definite individuals, generous, heroic, fortunate, mischievous, are called at critical moments to say the decisive word. As long as the particular interests of the different social groups are in such a

state of tension, that all the parties in the struggle reciprocally paralyze each other, then to make the political gearing move, there is need of the individual consciousness of a definite individual.

The social antitheses, which make of every human community an unstable organization, give to history, especially when it is seen and examined rapidly and in its main features, the character of a drama. This drama in all its relations is repeated from community to community, from nation to nation, from state to state, because the inner inequalities concurring with the external differentiations, have produced and produce the whole movement of wars, conquests, treaties, colonizations, etc. In this drama have always appeared, in the role of leaders of society, the men who are characterized as eminent, as great, and empiricism has concluded from their presence that they were the principal authors of history. To carry back the explanation of their appearance to the general causes and the common conditions of the social structure, is a thing which harmonizes perfectly with the data of our doctrine; but to try to eliminate them, as certain affected objectivists of sociology would willingly do, is pure capriciousness.

And to conclude, the partisan of historical materialism who sets himself the task of explaining, or relating, cannot do it through schemes.

History has always received a definite form, with an infinite number of accidents and variations. It

has a certain grouping, it has a certain perspective.

It is not enough to have eliminated preventively the hypothesis of factors, because the narrator constantly finds himself in the presence of things which seem incongruous, independent, and self-directing. To present the whole as a whole, and to discover in it the continuous relations of the events which border on each other, there is the difficulty.

The sum of events narrowly consecutive and precise gives the whole of history; and this is equivalent to saying that it is all that we know of our being, in so far as we are social beings and not simply natural beings.

XII.

In the successive whole, and in the continuous necessity of all historical events, is there, then, some ask, any meaning, any significance? This question, whether it comes from the camp of the idealists, or whether it comes to us from the mouth of the most circumspect critics, certainly, and in all cases, demands our attention, and requires an adequate answer.

In fact, if we stop at the premises, intuitive or intellectual, from which is derived the conception of *progress* as an idea which incloses and embraces the total of the human *processus*, it is seen that these presumptions all rest upon the mental need, which is in us, of attributing to one or more series of events a certain sense and a certain signification. The

conception of progress, for whoever examines it carefully in its specific nature, always implies judgments of estimation, and therefore, there is no one who can confuse it with the crude and bare notion of simple development, which does not contain that increment of value which makes us say of a thing that it is progressing.

I have already said, and, it seems to me, at sufficient length, how it is that progress does not exist as something imperative or regulative over the natural and immediate succession of the generations of men. That is as intuitive as is the actual coexistence of peoples, of nations and of states, which find themselves, at the same time, in a different stage of development; so undeniable is the actual condition of relative superiority and inferiority of nation as compared with nation; and again so certain is the partial and relative retrogression which has been produced several times in history, as Italy has exemplified for centuries. Still more, if there is a convincing proof of how progress must be understood in the sense of immediate law, and, to use a strong expression, of a physical and inevitable law, it is precisely this fact,—that social development by the very reasons of the *processus* which are inherent in it, often leads to retrogression. It is evident, on the other hand, that the faculty of progressing, like the possibility of retrogressing, does not constitute, to begin with, an immediate privilege, or an innate defect of a race, nor is either

one the direct consequence of geographical conditions. And, in fact, the primitive centers of civilization were multiple, those centers have been removed in the course of centuries, and finally the means, the discoveries, the results and the impulses of a definite civilization, already developed, are, within certain limits, communicable to all men indefinitely. In a word, progress and retrogression are inherent in the conditions and the rhythm of social development.

Now then, the faith in the universality of progress, which appeared with so much violence in the eighteenth century, rests upon this first positive fact, that men, when they do not find obstacles in external conditions, or do not find them in those which result from their own work in their social environment, are all capable of progress.

Moreover, at the bottom of this supposed or imagined unity of history, in consequence of which the *processus* of the different societies would form one single series of progress, there is another fact, which has offered motive and occasion for so many fantastic ideologies. If all nations have not progressed equally, still more, if some have stopped and have followed a backward route, if the *processus* of social development has not always, in every place and in all times, the same rhythm and the same intensity, it is nevertheless certain that, with the passage of the decisive activity from one people to another people in the course of history, the useful products, already acquired by those who were in

decadence, have been transmitted to those who were growing and rising. That is not so true of the products of sentiment and imagination, which nevertheless are themselves preserved and perpetuated in literary tradition, as of the results of thought, and especially of the discovery and of the production of technical means, which, once found, are communicated and transmitted directly.

Need we remind the reader that writing was never lost, although the peoples who invented it have disappeared from historic continuity? Need we recall again that we all have in our pockets, engraved on our watches, the Babylonian dial, and that we make use of algebra, which was introduced by those Arabs, whose historical activity has since been dispersed like the sands of the desert? It is useless to multiply these examples, because it is sufficient to think of technology and the history of discoveries in the broad sense of the word, for which the almost continuous transmission of the instruments of labor and production is evident.

And after all, the provisional summaries which are called universal histories, although they always reveal, in their aim and in their execution, something forced and artificial, would never have been attempted if human events had not offered to the empiricism of the narrators a certain thread, even though subtle, of continuity.

Take for example the Italy of the sixteenth century, which is evidently in decadence; but while it is declining, it transmits to the rest of Europe its

intellectual weapons. These are not all that pass to the civilization which continues, but even the world market establishes itself upon the foundation of those geographical discoveries, and those discoveries in the naval art, which were the work of Italian merchants, travelers and sailors. It is not only the methods of the art of war and the refinements of political diplomacy which passed outside of Italy (though it is only with these that men of letters ordinarily concerned themselves), but even the art of making money, which had acquired all the evidence of an elaborate commercial discipline, and one after the other the rudiments of the science, upon which is founded modern technique, and to begin with all the methodical irrigation of fields and the general laws of hydraulics. All that is so precisely true, that an amateur in conjectural theses might come to the point of asking himself this question: what would have become of Italy, in this modern bourgeois epoch, if, executing the project of the Venetian Senate (1504) of making something which would have resembled in its effects a piercing of the Isthmus of Suez, the Italian navy had found itself in a direct struggle with the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean, at the very moment when the shifting of historical activity from the Mediterranean to the ocean prepared the decadence of Italy? But enough of fantasy!

A certain historical continuity, in the empirical and circumstantial sense of the transmission and the

successive increase of the means of civilization, is then an incontestable fact. And, although this fact excludes all idea of preconceived design, of intentional or hidden finality, or pre-established harmony, and all the other whimsicalities in regard to which there has been such a deal of speculation, it does not exclude, for all that, the *idea of progress,* which we can utilize as an *estimation* of the course of human development. It is undeniable that progress does not embrace *materially* the succession of generations, and that its conception implies nothing categorical, considering that societies have also been in retrogression, but that does not prevent this idea from serving as a guiding thread and a *measure* to give a meaning to the historical *processus.* There is no common ground for critics who are prudent, in the use of specific concepts as in the method of their application, and those poor extreme evolutionists, who are scientists without the grammar and the principle of science, that is to say, without logic.

As I have said several times, ideas do not fall from heaven, and even those which, at a given moment arise from definite situations with the impetuosity of faith and with a metaphysical garb, carry always within themselves the index of their correspondence with the order of the facts, of which the explanation is sought or attempted. The idea of progress, as the unifier of history, appears with violence and becomes a giant in the eighteenth century, that is to say, in the heroic period of the intellectual and political life of the revolutionary

bourgeoisie. Just as this engendered, in the order of its works, the most intensive period of history that is known, it also produced its own ideology in the notion of progress. This ideology in its substance means that capitalism is the only form of production which is capable of extending all over the earth and of reducing the whole human race to conditions which resemble each other everywhere. If modern technique can be transported everywhere, if all the human race appear on a single field of competition and all the world as a single market, what is there astonishing in the ideology which, reflecting intellectually these conditions of fact, reaches the affirmation that the present historical unity has been prepared by everything which precedes it? Translating this concept of pretended *preparation* into the altogether natural concept of *successive condition*, and there is opened before us the road by which the passage is made from the ideology of progress to historical materialism; and now we arrive at the affirmation of Marx, that this form of bourgeois production is the last antagonistic form of the *processus* of society.

The miracles of the bourgeois epoch, in the unification of the social *processus*, find no parallel in the past. Here are the whole New World, Australia, Northern Africa, and New Zealand! And they all resemble us! And the rebound in the extreme East is made through imitation, and in Africa through conquest! In the presence of this universality and this cosmopolitanism, the acquisition of the Celts

and the Iberians to Roman civilization, and of the Germans and that the Slavs to the cycle of Roman Byzantine Christian civilization shrink into insignificance. This ever-growing unification is reflected more every day in the political mechanism of Europe; this mechanism, because founded on the economic conquest of the other parts of the world, oscillates henceforth with the flux and reflux which come from the most distant regions. In this most complicated mingling of action and reactions the war between Japan and China, made with methods imitated, or directly borrowed, from European technique, leaves its traces, deep and far-reaching, in the diplomatic relations of Europe, and still clearer traces in the stock exchange, which is the faithful interpreter of the consciousness of our time. This Europe, mistress of all the rest of the world, has recently seen the relations of the politics of the states of which it is composed oscillate in consequence of a revolt in the Transvaal, and in consequence of the ill success of the Italian armies in Abyssinia in these last days.*

The centuries which have prepared and carried to its present form the economic domination of bourgeois production have also developed the tendency to a unification of history under a general view; and in this fashion we find explained and justified the ideology of progress, which fills so many books of the philosophy of history and of *Kulturgeschichte*. The unity of social form, that is to say,

* The Italian edition of this Essay bears the date of March 10, 1896.

the unity of the capitalistic form of production, to which the bourgeoisie has tended for centuries, is reflected in the conception of the unity of history in more suggestive forms than the mind could ever have received from the narrow cosmopolitanism of the Roman empire or the one-sided cosmopolitanism of the Catholic Church.

But this unification of the social life, by the working of the capitalist form of production, developed itself from the beginning, and continues to develop itself, not according to preconceived rules, plans and designs, but, on the contrary, by reason of frictions and struggles, which in their sum form a colossal complication of antitheses. War without and war within. Struggle incessant among the nations, and struggles incessant between the members of each nation. And the interlacings of the deeds and the action of so many emulators, competitors and adversaries is so complicated, that the co-ordination of events very often escapes the attention, and it is a very difficult thing to discover their intimate connection. The struggle which actually exists among men, the struggles which now, with various methods, are unfolding among nations and within nations, have come to make us understand better in the midst of what difficulties the history of the past has unfolded. If the bourgeois ideology, reflecting the tendency to capitalist unification, has proclaimed the progress of the human race, historical materialism, on the contrary, and without proclamation, has

discovered that these are the antitheses which have thus far been the cause and the motive of all historical events.

Thus the movement of history, taken in general, appears to us as it were oscillating;—or rather, to use a more appropriate image, it seems that it is unfolding on a line often interrupted, and at certain moments it seems to return upon itself, sometimes it stretches out, removing itself far from the point of departure:—in an actual zigzag.

Granted the internal complication of every society, and granted the meeting of several societies on the field of competition (from the ingenuous forms of robbery, rapine and piracy to the refined methods of the elegant sport of the stock exchange) it is natural that every historical result, when it is measured in the one measure of individual expectation, appears very often like chance, and afterwards, considered theoretically, becomes for the mind more inextricable than the track of meteors.

Speaking of the irony which sits as a sovereign above history is not a simple phrase; because, in truth, if there is no god of Epicurus laughing above over human affairs, here below human affairs are of themselves playing a divine comedy.

Will this irony of human destinies ever cease? Will that form of association ever be possible which gives room for the possible complete development of all aptitudes, in such a way that the ulterior *processus* of history may become a real and true evolution? And, to speak like the amateurs of high-

sounding phrases, will there ever be a humanization of all men? When once in the communism of production the antitheses which are now the cause and the effect of economic differentiations are eliminated, will not all human energies acquire a very high degree of efficacy and intensity in co-operative effects, and at the same time will they not develop with a greater liberty of self-expression among all individuals?

It is in the affirmative answers to these questions that consists what *critical communism* says, that is to say foresees, of the future. But it does not say it and it does not foretell it as if it were discussing an abstract possibility, or like him who wishes, by his will, to give life to a state of things which he desires and which he dreams. But it says and predicts because what it announces must inevitably happen by the immanent necessity of history, seen and studied henceforth in the foundation of its economic substructure.

"It is only in an order of things where there will no longer be classes and class antagonisms that social revolutions will cease to be political revolutions.*

"To the old bourgeois society with its classes and class antagonisms will succeed an association in which the free development of each is the condition of the free development of all.†

"The relations of bourgeois production are the last antagonistic form of the social *processus* of

* Marx, Misere de la Philosophie, Paris, 1817, p. 178.
† Communist Manifesto, p. 16.

production—a form antagonistic not in the sense of individual antagonism, but of the antagonism which proceeds from the conditions of the social life of individuals; but the productive forces which are developing in the lap of bourgeois society are creating at the same time the material conditions to terminate that antagonism. With this social organization ends the prehistory of the human race.*

"With the taking possession of the means of production on the part of society, is excluded the production of commodities, and with it the dominance of the product over the producer. The anarchy which dominates in social production will be succeeded by conscious organization. The struggle for individual existence will cease. Only in this way man will detach himself, in a certain sense, from the animal world in a definite fashion, and will pass from a condition of animal existence to conditions of human existence. The entire sum of the conditions of life which has thus far dominated men will pass under the rule and the examination of men themselves, who will thus for the first time become the real masters of nature, because they will be the masters of their own association. The laws of their own social activity, which had been outside of them like foreign laws imposed upon them, will be applied and mastered by the men themselves, with full knowledge of their cause. Their very association, which appeared to men as if imposed by nature and history, will become their own and their free work.

* Marx, Zur Kritik der politischen Oekonomie, Berlin, 1859, p. 6 Pref. Compare my first Essay, pp. 48-50.

The foreign and objective forces, which till then dominated history, will pass under the care of men. Only from that moment will men make their own history with full understanding; only from that moment will the social causes which they put in motion, be able to arrive, in great part and in a proportion ever increasing, at the desired effects. It is the leap of the human race from the reign of necessity into that of liberty. To accomplish this action emancipating the world, such is the historic mission of the modern proletariat."

If Marx and Engels had been phrasemakers, if their spirit had not been made prudent, even scrupulous, by the daily and minute use and application of scientific methods, if the permanent contact with so many conspirators and visionaries had not given them a horror of every Utopia, opposing it indeed up to the point of pedantry, these formulas might pass for good-natured paradoxes, which criticism need not examine. But these formulas are, as it were, the close, the effective conclusion of the doctrine of historic materialism. They are the direct result of the criticism of economies and of historical dialectics.

In these formulas, which may be developed, as I have had occasion to show elsewhere, is summed up every forecast of the future, which is not and is not intended for a romance or a Utopia. And in these very formulas there is an adequate and conclusive response to the question with which this chapter began: Is there in the series of historic events a meaning and a significance?

THE END.

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